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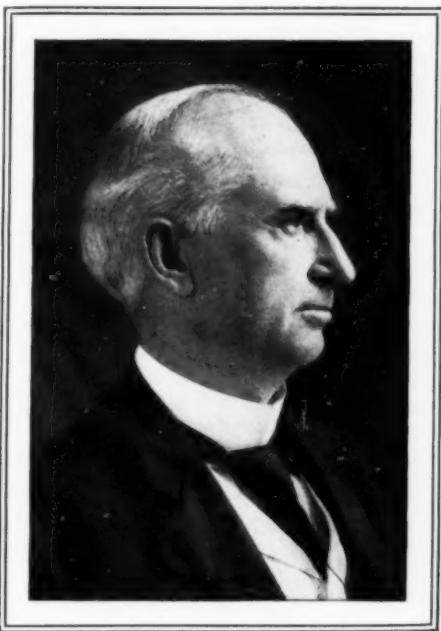
OUR UNBUSINESSLIKE SENATE

A GREAT LAWMAKING BODY WHOSE RULES MAKE LEGISLATIVE
EFFICIENCY IMPOSSIBLE

BY JUDSON C. WELLIVER

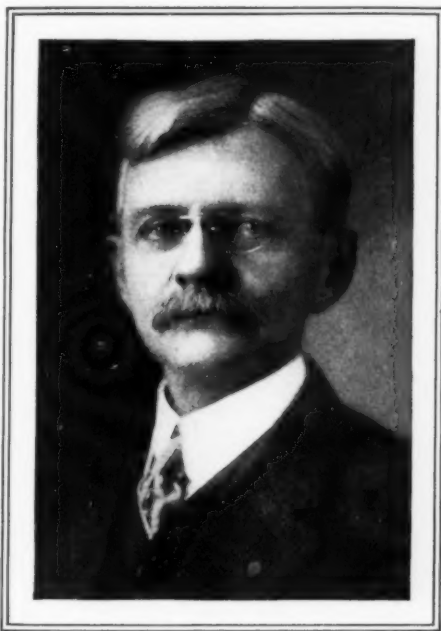
IT was half past eleven in the forenoon of March 1, according to the big clock in the rear of the Senate Chamber. In half an hour the Senate would convene, with just seventy-two hours to intervene before the session must close.

For three months Congress had been grinding away, and its grist now awaited the last perfunctory approval of the Senate for conference reports and the like. Without that, appropriation bills and general acts of first-class importance would fail.



JAMES B. CLARKE, OF ARKANSAS, PRESIDENT PRO
TEMPORE OF THE UNITED STATES
SENATE

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Washington*



THOMAS R. MARSHALL, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES AND PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

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A correspondent strolled into the deserted press gallery and glanced around the still, almost deserted chamber. He had sat up half the previous night with the "greatest legislative body on earth," he knew he would have to do the same or worse the next two nights, and he was profoundly bored.

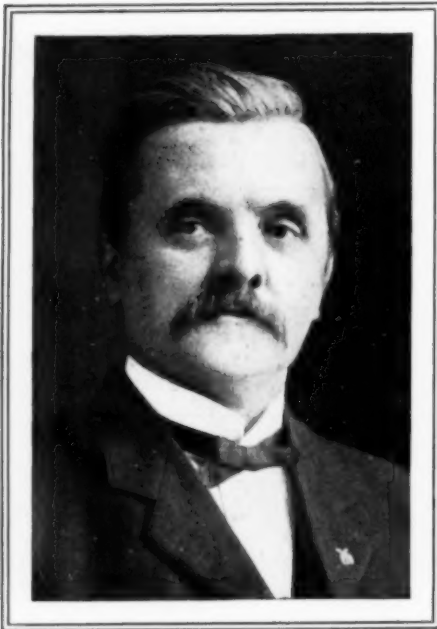
But suddenly, in the quiet arena below, something happened that seemed to interest

"What's the row now?" he demanded. "Row? What row?" blandly parried the Senator.

"Oh, you know! What are you insurgents going to filibuster about?"

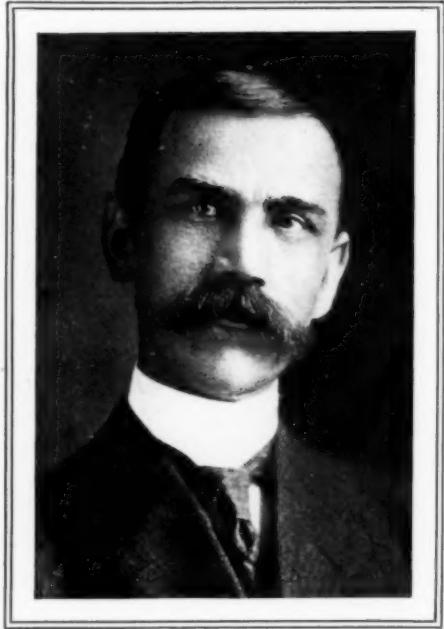
"Filibuster? Young man, you grieve me. No high-minded statesman filibusters. Perchance a few of us may be moved to some extended remarks—"

"Yes, I see you have the ammunition-



GEORGE W. NORRIS, OF NEBRASKA, WHO LED THE LONG FIGHT TO REFORM THE HOUSE RULES, AND THEREBY WON A SENATORIAL TOGA

From a copyrighted photograph by Harris & Ewing, Washington



REED SMOOT, OF UTAH, CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN, ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL MEN IN A BODY WHICH ONCE CAME NEAR UNSEATING HIM

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him hugely. He leaned over the railing and watched closely.

A page came in with a huge armful of books, documents, and reports, and piled them on the desk of a certain Senator.

Before he was done another boy came with a like burden, and then another. In a few moments that desk had a fortification built around it which looked like a library of the world's best literature.

Then the boys began piling books around another desk, and then another.

The correspondent rushed down-stairs and to the committee-room of a Senator who claimed the desk first fortified.

hoists at work and the decks cleared for action. But what's it about?"

The Senator led the way into his private office and shut the door.

"It isn't a filibuster—not yet," he said; "just a bluff. It'll be a filibuster if the bluff doesn't do the business."

"Yes, I know; but what's it about?"

"You won't print it till I give the word?"

"Of course not."

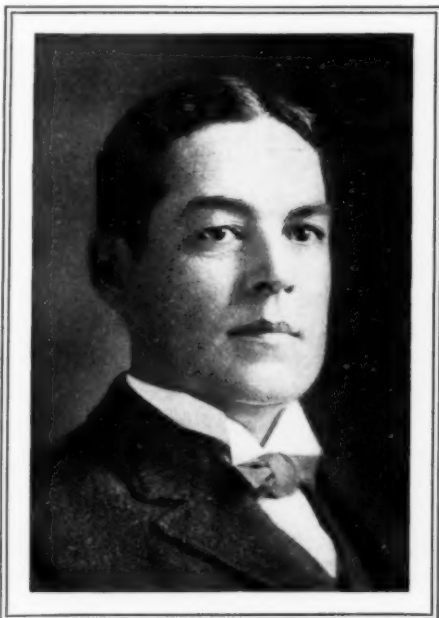
"Well," said the statesman, "the boys intend to call up and pass the bill for a street-car right-of-way across town on Blank Street."

That was enough. The newspaperman knew that for years the Blank Street project had been pushed in season and out. The residents on the street didn't want a car-line; a certain corporation trying to get across the city did. Some Senators, suspected of being interested in the corporation, were urging it. They were opposed by a little group, some of whom owned homes on that street, while others wanted

piling more books around the desks. He took a quick survey of the enemy's works, looked perturbed, and took his seat.

Three minutes later the Senator who was leading the fight against the bill entered. He looked as innocent as a Manx cat comfortably filled with pet canary.

Senator Right-of-Way walked over to Senator Manx's seat, and from the gallery a pretty bit of pantomime could be ob-



ROBERT L. OWEN, OF OKLAHOMA, AUTHOR OF THE CLOSURE RESOLUTION, NOW PENDING, WHICH WOULD REVOLUTIONIZE THE SENATE'S PROCEDURE

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ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE, OF WISCONSIN, WHO HOLDS THE RECORD FOR THE LONGEST SPEECH (NEARLY TWENTY HOURS) EVER DELIVERED IN CONGRESS

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to defeat the project because they believed it to be against the public interest.

"Are you in shape to make good?" asked the correspondent.

"We have just about seventy-three hours of continuous conversation organized and ready to be let loose," replied the Senator.

"Then you'll not need to let it loose," commented the interviewer.

THE FILIBUSTER A TRUMP CARD

The correspondent hurried back to his front seat in the gallery to await developments. Almost immediately the Senator who was urging the right-of-way bill entered, and noted another relay of pages

served. They shook hands. Right-of-Way sat down. Manx started chatting cheerily, perhaps about the weather. Right-of-Way fidgeted a bit; then, suddenly squaring himself, he leaned over and asked a question. Senator Manx nodded.

They talked earnestly for a few moments, both rising to their feet. Senator Manx picked up the calendar of business, and brandished it as he talked. Then he pointed to the clock, waved his arm toward the fortified desks, shook his head decidedly, and waited.

The ultimatum had been delivered.

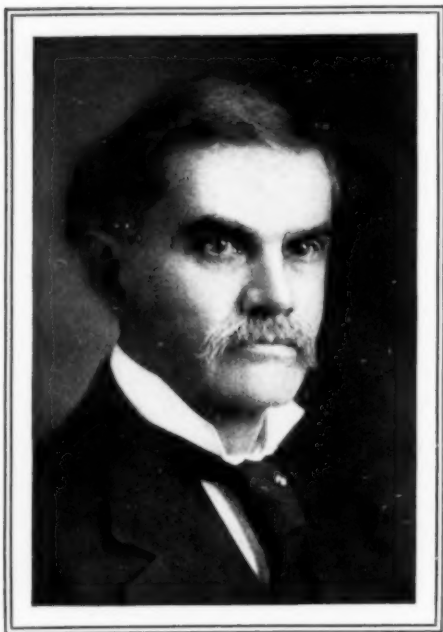
Senator Right-of-Way pleaded, but Manx only shook his head. In another

moment they were both talking and both nodding their heads; then Right-of-Way turned and walked back to his seat.

Senator Manx pushed the button on his desk, and a page came. He spoke a few words, gestured toward the piles of books, and walked out. The force of pages promptly began lugging out the documents they had just been bringing in.

"It worked, all right, all right!" mused the observer in the gallery, as he started down to see Senator Manx.

He found that distinguished publi-

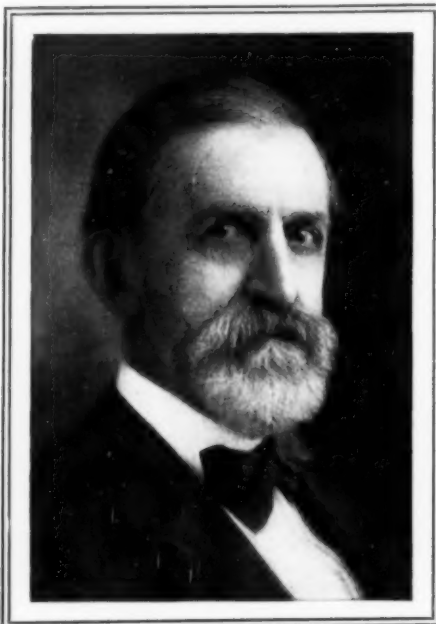


JOHN SHARP WILLIAMS, OF MISSISSIPPI, AN INFLUENTIAL MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE
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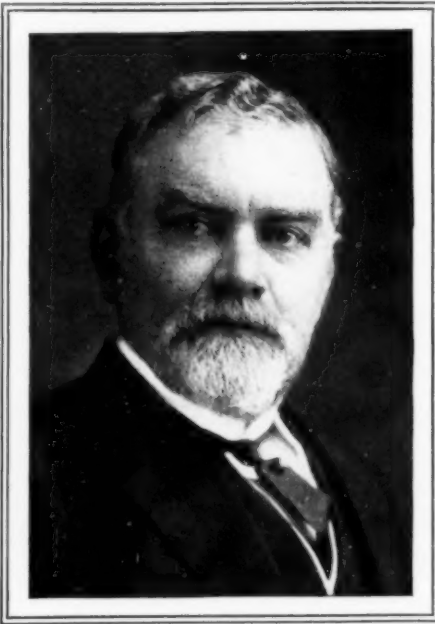
cist in a peculiarly amiable mood.

"You got that one across easy," said the scribe.

"Yes; he quit as soon as I told him that eight of us were ready to start talking the minute he called up the bill. Only nine hours a piece; it would have been easy money. But say"—a big smile broke across his face—"you missed it. Sawyer was going to read the complete orations of Patrick Henry, I was to contribute the works of Dr. Samuel Butler, and Baker was in perfect form with 'Huckleberry Finn.' Ever hear him read



JOHN W. KERN, OF INDIANA, A LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE
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JAMES A. O'GORMAN, OF NEW YORK, A LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE
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'Huckleberry Finn'? It's worth sitting up all night, any time!"

Thus it comes about that there is not, to this day, a cross-town car-line on Blank Street, Washington. The Senate's tradition of unlimited debate had served the probably useful purpose of defeating a grab for a franchise. A little group of determined Senators, prepared to put on a long-distance talking exhibition—to consume, in short, the entire remaining seventy-two hours of a Congress session, to the exclusion of other business, without adjournments, rest, or intermission—had been able to kill the project by merely convincing the opposition that they were ready to carry the matter to that extreme.

Suppose the franchise-grabbers had not surrendered, what would have happened?

The bill to grant the Blank Street rights would have been called up by its author, explained as having the proper committee indorsement and as being very important to Washington, and a vote asked. Thereupon its leading opponent would have risen and asked that before the vote he be permitted to address the Senate on the bill. If it were still pressed, and all sides were prepared to go to extremes, the Marathon of oratory would have started.

HOW THE SENATE FIGHTS A FILIBUSTER

If eight Senators had leagued together to make the fight, it would mean that they must face the prospect of a continuous session. That is the Senate's one ridiculous means of fighting a filibuster. A Senator who takes the floor in such a crisis must keep it; if he gives it up, his rights end. If there is nobody else to continue the discussion, a vote can be forced.

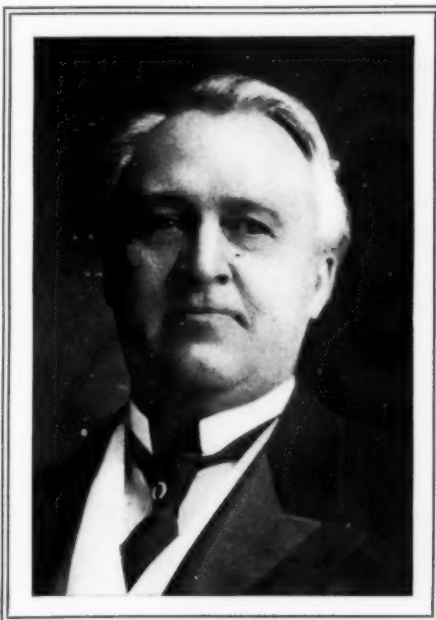
So, whenever the Senate sees that one or two or three men are determined to talk a proposition to death, it counters by refusing to adjourn. Continuous sessions lasting almost a week—day, night, and Sunday—are by no means unknown. The filibusters must then occupy all the time with their talk. Of course, in such a case it is not really discussion; it becomes a physical "stunt" of holding the floor and saying words, words, words, hour after hour.

Senator La Follette, who holds the record, by virtue of his famous filibuster speech against the Vreeland - Aldrich currency measure of 1908, talked well-nigh twenty hours. When he sat down, Senator Gore, of Oklahoma, who is totally blind, insisted on talking; he got the floor under the rule; and talked for six hours. Senator Stone, of Missouri, was to have followed him, but there was a fluke; Mr. Stone was not in the chamber when Gore, supposing him present and ready to resume, sat down. The opposition seized the opportunity, and before

either La Follette or Stone could be hurried into the breach, the question had been put on the passage of the bill and carried.

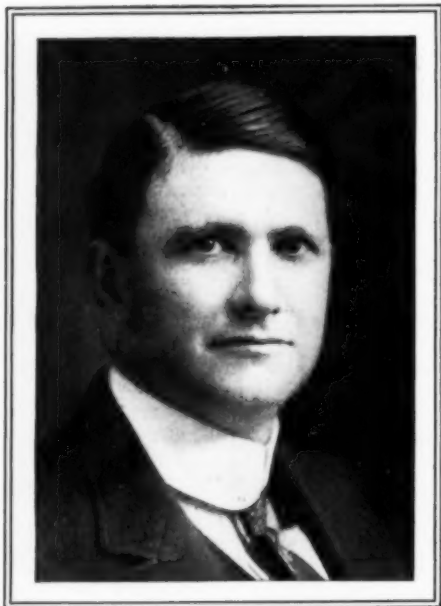
But for the accident of a blind man's mistake in sitting down five minutes too soon, those three men might have defeated the legislation which both the Senate and the House overwhelmingly favored.

The rule of unlimited discussion is the minority's power of veto. Let a measure get jammed down into the last few days of the session, and a very small minority, if sufficiently determined, can always kill it. The whole strategy of Senatorial management always turns, in the last two or three weeks of a session, on the situation created by this continuous-talk rule. Appropria-



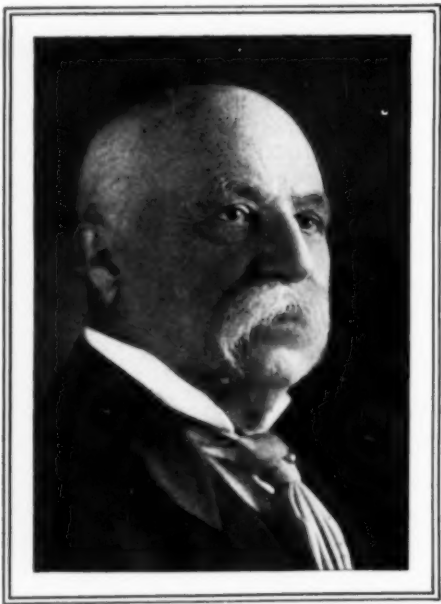
LEE S. OVERMAN, OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON RULES

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LUKE LEA, OF TENNESSEE, THE YOUNGEST SENATOR, A LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE

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JACOB H. GALLINGER, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE

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tion bills, or something else in which there is real and general concern, must be held back to the last hours, so that in case a filibuster is started an appeal may be made, in their behalf, to end it.

Commonly, in the face of a determined filibuster, the advocates of a measure give up the fight and withdraw their bill as soon as they realize that there is no chance. That happened several years ago, when Senator Carmack, of Tennessee, took the floor about twenty-two hours before Congress was due to adjourn, and started to discuss the ship-subsidy measure. It had passed the House, and was certain to get a goodly majority in the Senate if it could only be brought to a vote. The Democrats had decided to talk it to death, and for several hours Mr. Carmack poured forth one of the most witty, brilliant, and entertaining addresses that the Senate had ever listened to, before the bill was withdrawn with the agreement that it would not be further pressed.

HOW SENATOR CARTER KILLED A BILL

On the other hand, during the McKinley administration, Senator Carter, of Montana, sprung a real surprise on the Senate by taking the floor to talk a river and harbor appropriation bill to death. The measure carried something like fifty million dollars, and President McKinley, though he wished to avoid the unpleasant necessity of a veto, was determined that it ought not to pass.

He sent for Carter, and asked him to talk it to death. Carter said not a word to anybody. It was not suspected, when he rose to talk on the measure, some ten hours before the time for the *sine die* announcement, that he was the President's emissary, commissioned to kill the measure; but he was.

Like Carmack, he launched forth into a marvelous performance of wit, humor, endurance, and vocal calisthenics. He was still on the floor, going strong and refusing to yield, when the presiding officer's gavel dropped in signal that the session was dead.

A few days later President McKinley named Carter—he had been defeated for reelection, and his time as a Senator expired with that same gavel stroke—to membership on the Congressional commission for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, at ten thousand dollars a year and no

duties worth worrying about. It was the "lame duck's" reward for services in killing that appropriation measure.

These illustrations are by way of showing that the rule of unlimited debate may be invoked to accomplish both good and bad ends, and how it works.

There is room for very sincere difference of opinion whether the rule is on the whole good or bad. It makes the Senate a really deliberative body; there is no doubt of that. Adopted back in 1806, when there were only about one-third as many Senators as now, and when the business of legislation could not be compared for volume or intricacy with that of to-day, it has been preserved ever since. It has been useful at times, beyond cavil. It has killed many an undesirable measure. It has enabled minorities to dictate compromises and conditions. It has stood in the way of majority control. If democracy is yet so imperfect and so dangerous that there is need to give to an insignificant minority the power of veto, then the rule is good and useful.

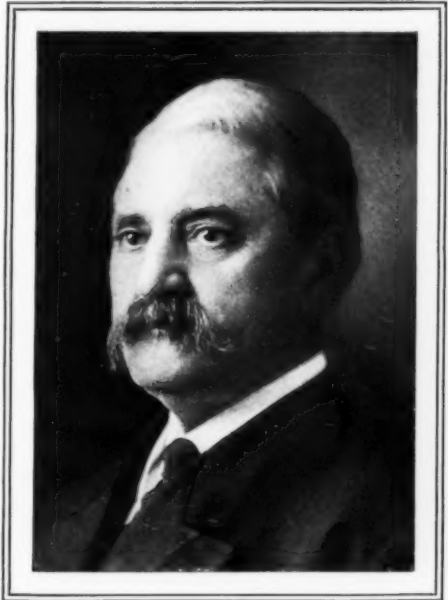
SHOULD NOT THE MAJORITY RULE?

But is it to be admitted that rules should be made with the purpose of preventing bad legislation? To admit that is to admit that there is more harm than good, on an average, in legislation that can command a majority of votes in both houses of Congress. To admit that is to charge representative government with hopeless incapacity or utter corruption.

Senator Owen, of Oklahoma, who is determined to have the rule of unlimited debate repealed, declares flatly that the argument of preventing bad legislation has no weight with him, and should have none with the country. He argues that legislation ought not to be dealt with in such fashion.

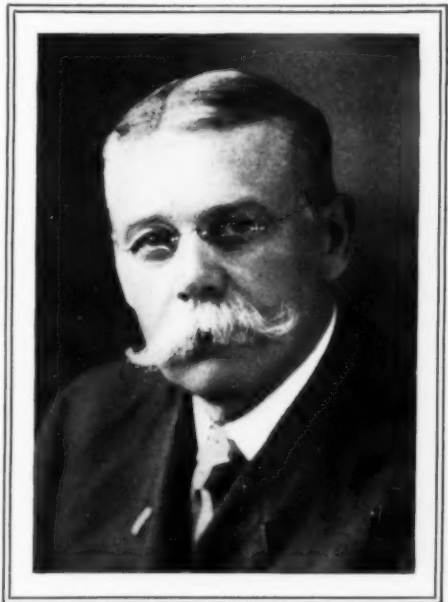
"If it can command a majority of votes, it ought to pass, good or bad," he insists. "Let the people and Congress learn by experience, let them take their medicine; but don't tie their hands for fear they may do the wrong thing."

So Senator Owen has introduced a resolution to amend the existing practise. His proposal certainly does not seem revolutionary. As the rule actually works, it is necessary to get a unanimous agreement of the Senate fixing the time to vote upon any important measure. The last month or six



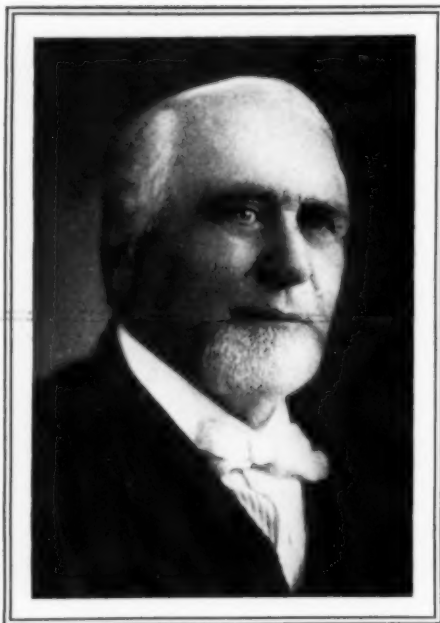
ALBERT S. CUMMINS, OF IOWA, THE ONE PROGRESSIVE REPUBLICAN ON THE RULES COMMITTEE

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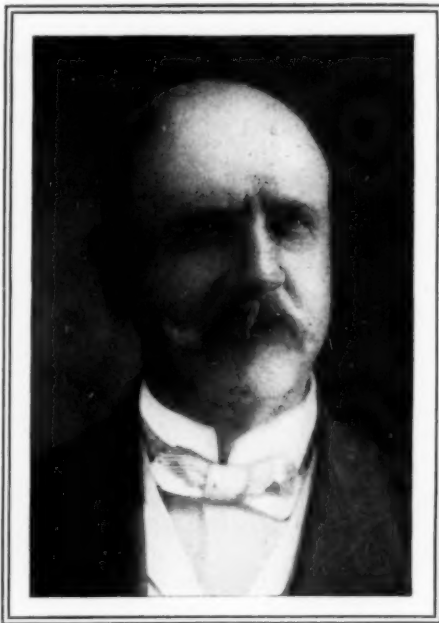
FRANCIS E. WARREN, OF WYOMING, A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE

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KNUTE NELSON, OF MINNESOTA, A CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE

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AUGUSTUS O. BACON, OF GEORGIA, A CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRATIC MEMBER OF THE RULES COMMITTEE

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weeks of the consideration of a great measure, like tariff revision or railroad legislation, will see an almost daily discussion of the problem of agreeing on a date for the final vote. It must be fixed long in advance, in order to leave ample time for everybody to talk himself dry. Any Senator, by objecting, can prevent the agreement; but once the unanimous consent is secured and recorded, it cannot be changed, even by unanimous consent.

This is one of the most ridiculous things about the Senate rules. It was recently made the subject of a ruling which, though the Senate was disposed to admit its folly, none the less stands. Because it illustrates so completely how this great legislative body can get tangled up in its own rules, the incident is worth relating.

In executive session, the Senate took up a certain nomination, and by unanimous consent agreed to vote on its confirmation the following Friday. When that day came Senator Gronna presented substantial reasons against confirmation. The Senate was convinced, without regard to party, that there should be delay and investigation.

But how? The Senate had recorded its unanimous consent to vote at that time. Could it get out of its own unanimous consent agreement with itself?

Somebody suggested the rather obvious idea that it could, by unanimous consent. That turned loose the flow of argument. Senator Williams, one of the body's sharps in rules, declared it manifest that a later unanimous consent decree could set aside an earlier one; but he sadly admitted that in half a century the Senate had never done such a thing.

There it stood; the Senate *must* vote, though it didn't want to. Finally, when a good part of an hour had been spent debating the issue, Senator Simmons projected a wonderful idea, in effect this:

"Let us vote, as we are bound to do, and confirm the nomination. Then let Senator Gronna move to reconsider, and no doubt everybody will join with him in favor of reconsideration."

That seemed to unscramble the egg; but Gronna was suspicious. He feared that a trick would leave him undone, with the man confirmed and the reconsideration blocked. Senator Simmons was insistent.

"Why," he said, "if the Senator will consent to such a vote, I will pledge myself personally to make the motion to reconsider; and this side will support it, too."

Mr. Simmons being one of the Democratic leaders, his promise was good, and Gronna assented to the suggestion. The motion was put, the confirmation was voted, and instantly Mr. Simmons moved to reconsider. Everybody voted for it, and the tangle was untangled.

It had taken just about an hour for the Senate to get out of the labyrinth. The undesirable appointment had actually stood confirmed for half a minute. But the inviolability of a unanimous consent agreement had been sustained!

CURIOSITIES OF THE SENATE'S RULES

Senator Wesley L. Jones, of Washington, recently demonstrated for the Senate's benefit that it is practically unable to do any business except by unanimous consent. He took umbrage because the Senate would not vote him an additional clerk, and vowed to make it sorry.

Next morning a Senator rose to introduce a bill.

"I object!" shouted Jones.

The chamber looked amazed. Jones showed it that under the rules a Senator must "ask leave to introduce a bill," and in case of objection must wait till the next day. He insisted, and the bill waited; the request for consent, however, was duly recorded.

Next day the Senator with the bill rose and introduced it. Ordinarily, by common consent, the procedure is that the bill shall be read a first and second time by title and referred to committee. The clerk proceeded with this formula, but again Jones objected.

Again there was amazement. Jones showed that under the rule the bill could be read by title only once on the day of its introduction; then it must wait a day to be read the second time and referred. Again Jones stuck for the literal rule. He demonstrated that it took three days to get a bill introduced and referred; the unanimous consent procedure had required about fifteen seconds.

A few days later Jones showed the Senate some more things about its sacred rules. An unimportant detail of business resulted in a call for a division, and thirty-one Senators rose on one side, nobody on

the other. There was an ample quorum present, though less than a quorum was disclosed by the count of those rising. Thereupon Jones interjected the demand for a roll-call to secure a quorum.

The rules made it imperative. Even if the whole ninety-six Senators had been in their seats, and if every one had known that all the other ninety-five were on hand, nevertheless, the call for a quorum necessitated a roll-call. That means a waste of ten or fifteen minutes, at best.

THE QUESTION OF A QUORUM

Senator Clarke, of Arkansas, president *pro tempore*, was in the chair. He was tired of the filibuster. Instead of ordering the secretary to call the roll, he said:

"The secretary will take note of the presence in their seats of the Senator from California, Mr. Works; of the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. Norris; of the Senator from—"

The secretary was "taking note," when Mr. Works rose and protested that he had stood and been counted on the division. So did Mr. Norris. The presiding officer apologized, and proceeded to enumerate others; but he was stopped.

The storm broke all at once, when the grave and reverend Senate suddenly realized the horror that it had confronted. Its presiding officer had tried to perpetrate the outrageous common sense of counting a quorum! He had presumed to assume that because he could see a quorum with his two eyes, it was there! No more frightful degradation of Senatorial tradition could possibly be imagined.

Years ago, when Tom Reed did the same thing in the House, it marked an epoch in American politics; but it had never been attempted in the Senate. The protests were loud and insistent.

Jones got into the proceedings and added to the ignominy by declaring that the presiding officer ought to go ahead. He opined that it was just plain common sense for the presiding officer, if he saw a quorum, to say he saw it, and end the fuss. Jones lectured the Senate a few moments about the foolishness of its rules and sat down.

But the presiding officer bent before the storm. He stopped the effort to count a quorum, thus officially establishing that the Senate does not presume that any man can preside over it who is competent to see or count.

Such are a few of the eccentricities of the rules under which the "greatest legislative body" legislates. As a result, of course, most of the legislation doesn't get done. Bills are introduced by the thousands; a few pass; the vast majority neither pass nor get serious consideration. The Senate is so busy talking without limit, or getting out of trouble with its rules, that it really hasn't time to legislate any more.

MAKING EFFICIENCY IMPOSSIBLE

Take the unlimited discussion tradition. There is not a State Legislature in the Union in which either body has such a rule. The national House has always permitted the previous question to be moved and debate to be limited by vote of the body. Gladstone established the right to limit debate in the British House of Commons thirty years ago. The Lords have a like rule. The French Chamber of Deputies has had a closure rule for ninety-nine years, and it is constantly applied; indeed, the French would feel incapable of doing any business at all if they had to revert to their ancient practise of unlimited debate. When they had that rule, it led to filibusters which developed intense violence and bitterness—exactly as they do in our Senate, as well as killing a vast amount of legislation that the great majority wanted passed.

Among the parliaments of the world our Senate is the only body of first-class importance that now pretends to adhere to such a practise.

The Senate rules are frankly based on the presumption that, as between legislating and not legislating, it is on the whole better not to legislate. Not a few people believe that; but it is a denial of all democracy and of the fitness of Congress to represent the people.

Nowadays, the country's business demands constantly more and more of the time of Congress. It is but a few years since the nation was startled to be told that a single Congress had appropriated a billion dollars. Now every Congress appropriates more than two billions of dollars, and it will not be many more years before the amount will be three billions. More and more time is needed to consider the vast business details that are involved in so huge a budget.

Alongside of this fiscal business runs the increasing tide of general, social, and

economic legislation that must be considered. It is recognized rather vaguely that we are entering a period of social revolution, or at least of very rapid evolution. We look at things through new glasses. Principles that were presumed to be as fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians are boldly questioned. Nothing is accepted as final; everything is under discussion; legislation is demanded constantly to adjust conditions which, a generation ago, nobody regarded as amenable to such treatment.

One consequence is that Congress has to be in session more than formerly. The all-summer session is rather the rule than the exception. Legislators frankly recognize that vacations are bound to be shorter and shorter in future; that Congress is doomed to something like nine months of the steady grind, year after year. It is hard, when Washington sizzles and the summer resorts invite; but it is inevitable.

Yet with all the hardship and expense of it, with all the disappointment, and futility, and failure to get consideration of measures that deserve it, the Senate thus far sees no reason to give itself a business set of rules. There are individual Senators—and a fast-increasing class of them, too—who would be glad to see something done toward progress in this regard; but the conservative view still prevails.

THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON RULES

The Rules Committee is headed by Senator Overman, of North Carolina, a conservative of the old school on such questions. Its Democratic membership includes Kern, of Indiana, O'Gorman, of New York, Williams, of Mississippi, Lea, of Tennessee, and Bacon, of Georgia. On the Republican side are Warren, of Wyoming, Gallinger, of New Hampshire, and Nelson, of Minnesota, all crusted conservatives on rules or anything else. The one progressive Republican is Cummins, of Iowa. As a whole, the committee is not entirely hopeless, though there is not much initiative and reforming enthusiasm, on the subject of rules, among its membership.

Jones thinks that the rules need to be understood thoroughly, as a preliminary to some amendment. Before very long he may be found to have the support of Norris, the Nebraskan who led the House fight for rules reform, and made that question a national issue. On that issue Norris rode

into the Senate, and it is quite unbelievable that he will remain there long without finding a field for the exercise of his parliamentary talents.

The Owen resolution, now pending, is modeled on the lines of procedure in the French chambers. It provides:

That the Senate may at any time, upon motion of a Senator, fix a day and hour for a final vote upon any matter pending in the Senate. *Provided, however,* that this rule shall not be invoked to prevent debate by any Senator who requests opportunity to express his views within a time to be fixed by the Senate.

Any Senator may demand of a Senator making a motion if it be made for dilatory or obstructive purposes; and if the Senator making the motion declines or evades an answer, or concedes the motion to have been made for such purposes, the president of the Senate shall declare such motion out of order.

The first paragraph is the essential one. At present the Senate cannot "fix a day and hour for a final vote" except by unanimous consent. One man may block the whole proceeding by a simple "I object." It is proposed that, on motion of any

Senator, a majority vote may fix the time for a vote, giving ample time for everybody to talk as long as proper consideration may dictate.

It will not be long before the Senate will have to consider seriously the demand for change in its rules. When that time comes there will be ingenious and involved defenses for the ancient tradition of endless talk; but in the end the reform will carry, simply because it is utterly impossible for the government's business to be transacted under a rule that gives to any small group the power of veto on any business to which they object.

Parliamentary rules are intended to expedite, not to hinder, parliamentary business. As our governmental affairs increase in magnitude and complexity, there is a growing demand for efficiency in dealing with them, and there arises a gathering protest against a system that renders efficiency impossible.

When the pressure for business becomes so strong that hindrances will no longer be tolerated, rules will be modernized in the Senate, just as they have been in the House and in every other legislative body.

SONG OF THE SUPER-WOMAN

I ENTER in and bar the door;
No hand comes tapping there—
No lover's footstep on my floor,
No child to claim my care;
Though poor and mean this house of mine,
I live alone and free,
A barrier of rough-hewn pine
Between the world and me.

The brain's swift streams untrammelled run,
The wings of thought aspire,
Outstrip the chariot of the sun,
Unhampered by desire
Of lesser things—the loves of earth
That hold weak souls in thrall,
And chain the mind's first child at birth,
Which, free, had conquered all!

The stars are mine for company,
The clouds my lovers are;
I know the language of the sea,
That calls across the bar;
And yet—the pictures that I paint,
All bear the heart's impress,
As though my soul meets with complaint
Unfettered loneliness!

Constance Skinner

YOU NEVER CAN TELL

BY CLARENCE BUDINGTON KELLAND

AUTHOR OF "THE INTENTION OF THE TESTATOR," "EROS AND THE EAR-TRUMPET," ETC.

AFTER a lifetime spent in the labors of the farm, Grandpa Papkin appeared older than his sixty-five years. He had arrived at the odd-job stage of life; smoked much in shady corners; was beloved by dogs and cats, and dominated by his son James, with whom he lived.

With old Aunt Purvis, who lived in the square white house on the corner, he was great cronies. Sometimes this intimacy trouble grandpa's children no less than it did aunt's.

"S'pose them old folks was to take it into their heads to marry!" James Papkin said with a frown. "Wish we could do somethin' to discourage father from goin' there so much."

"Guess we could stop it, if worse came to worst," Martha replied confidently. "What would they live on, anyway?"

"Father's got close onto a thousand dollars saved up into the bank."

Mrs. Papkin peered out through the doorway, wiping her hands on her apron the while.

"I declare," she said, "there goes a slick-lookin' feller drivin' by. Looks like one of them pictures into the magazines. Wonder where he comes from, and what he's a doin' here!"

James stretched his neck to get a better view.

"Looks to me like one of them sharpers or somethin'. I got my s'picious of fellers that dresses like that. A body that's so fixed up on the outside must do it cause he's lackin' within. Where'd father go to?"

"I declare"—with a glance at the clock—"if he hain't been gone more'n two hours! He went off down-town to git me a spool of sixty white and two pounds of sugar. Bet he's stopped to Purvis's—right in the middle of the day, too!"

James washed noisily in the tin basin outside the door, blowing and gurgling into the suds that he rubbed on his face, as if it were a most unpleasant function—which it no doubt was. Standing erect, he delved carefully into one ear after the last remnant of moisture, blinking down the road as he did so.

"Here he comes—just turnin' out o' Purvis's yard. Wouldn't say nothin' to him, if I was you, Marthy."

Shortly grandpa's bent shoulders were bobbing above the pickets of the fence. He reached over the gate for the latch, and came slowly up the sun-softened tar sidewalk.

"Should think you'd know better'n to be gallivantin' around in the sun sich a day as this," began Martha.

"That's so, that's so," agreed the old man. "And say, Marthy, I clean, plumb forgot thet there thread and sugar—clean, plumb forgot 'em."

"Well, I never, Grandpa Papkin! What ever have you been doin' these two hours?"

"Had a leetle business with a feller down-town; and then I stopped a bit to Mary Purvis's on the way back. Mighty hot, ain't it?"

Through the door grandpa could see Martha scurrying between the steaming hotness of the kitchen and the red-clothed table in the dining-room, carrying in the dishes of the midday meal. With one hand pressed to the rheumatic spot in his back, and the other braced against the stop, he arose slowly and ambled to his place.

During the process of dining there was little conversation. The only sound was the stirring of spoon in cup, the clatter of knife and fork, and the occasional request to pass this or that which was quite beyond reach. While the pie was being brought,

however, there was a brief interval, of which James Papkin made use to observe:

"You been spendin' quite a sight of time to the Purvis's lately, father."

The old man looked at his son, startled, then down at the table-cloth again.

"Yes," he admitted, "Mary Purvis and me takes a lot of pleasure in each other's company. Old folks feels a sort of drawin' together, I guess, Jimmy—a sort of drawin' together, like as if they have somethin' in common."

"If you was a young feller, now," James said jovially, "folks would be sayin' you was sparkin' Mis' Purvis."

"Yes," interjected Martha, "and I wouldn't be s'prised a mite if they was sayin' so anyhow!"

Grandpa appeared uncomfortable and sought to change the subject.

"Calc'late I'll potter round in the garden this afternoon," he observed.

"I calc'late you won't do no sich thing—not in this beatin' sun. You set right into the shade till four o'clock, anyway."

"Now, Marthy," expostulated grandpa, "don't you guess I'm old enough to look out for myself?"

"You ain't so young as you once was," she said shortly; "and you'd be overdoin', and gittin' a stroke or somethin', if I wasn't always at you."

II

An hour later Martha put her head out of the door to summon grandpa to some trifling service, but he was not to be seen.

"Huh!" she sniffed. "Over to Purvis's agin, I'll bet a cent!"

And so it was. Grandpa Papkin and Aunt Purvis occupied the shady porch of the big white house. The old lady was knitting with subconscious art, her eyes and her thoughts far from the black stocking in her lap. Grandpa was smoking placidly, his back against a pillar, and a yellow cat purring on his knees.

"Mary," the old man was saying, "folks is beginnin' to suspect I'm courtin' you."

Aunt Mary Purvis was a tiny, pert old lady, with keen black eyes that snapped with quick anger or twinkled with deep humor.

"We-el, you be, ain't you?" she drawled, and the twinkle was not hidden by the iron rims of her spectacles.

"Reckon I be." He paused and stroked the cat, which purred loudly in approval

and gratitude. "I don't see why old folks ain't as much entitled to do what they like as young folks be."

"I opine it's because they ain't got no sperret left to stand up for themselves and fight their own battles. When your hair gits white, it seems as if your courage sort o' oozes out."

"I'm goin' to speak right out about it perty soon," declared grandpa. "I'm goin' to tell Jim and Marthy that you and me is goin' to marry; and then"—he smote his knee so vehemently that the yellow cat jumped with fright and arched its back—"and then, by gum, we'll do it!"

"They won't never let us."

"We'll elope!" said grandpa.

He was awed at the boldness of his own proposal. Aunt Purvis, however, had an eye for practical things.

"What would we live on, I'd like to know? You ain't able to work stiddy, and if we was to go elopin', and git our folks mad, where'd we be?"

"I got more'n a thousand dollars saved up into the bank."

"Drawin' 'most a dollar a week int'rest," said Aunt Purvis dryly.

"We could live up the princ'pal."

This impious utterance made them look at each other and gasp. It was not to be thought of.

"There must be some way," urged grandpa.

"When you diskiver it, you come 'round and tell me," said aunt, "and we'll go keepin' house right sudden."

Grandpa shook his head dolefully, and got painfully to his feet.

"Reckon I'll git along down to the post-office. Maybe somebody's left me a fortin. G'by, Mary!"

He walked off townward with an assumption of spryness that cost him a twinge at every step.

III

THE teakettle was singing over the wood fire in the Purvis kitchen when grandpa turned again through the whitewashed gate toward the porch where aunt sat, still knitting. This time there was a real spring in his step. He chewed exultantly on a straw, and his eyes, not yet dulled by years, twinkled and glowed with excitement. Panting, he sank on the top step, and the cat had time to install itself on his knee before he found breath to speak.

"Mary," he puffed, "we're a goin' to make it! You and me kin git married and nobody to say a word—nobody. I've found a way."

"Ben Papkin!" exclaimed aunty.

"I've done *so*," grandpa exulted. "It's an investment. I got money into the bank, like I told you, and I'm a goin' to invest it so's it'll bring us enough to live on fine and not be beholdin' to nobody."

"What be you goin' to invest into, Ben?"

"The manufacturin' business—auty-mobiles." The old fellow was so delighted, so full of his project, that he could not sit still, and in resentment the cat stepped off his lap to find a more stable resting-place. "I met a young feller down-town, and got to talkin' with him about things—crops and politics and fishin' and sich. I took a shine to him, an' 'fore I knowed it I told him 'bout you and me; and he seemed to understand that somehow old folks ain't allowed to do what they want to."

"Once," he says to me, 'I had a grandmother. I know how 'tis!'

"So I told him the whole thing."

"Well, I swan, Ben Papkin!"

"And I told him I didn't have but what little money I got into the bank. When I told him how much, he set thinkin' a minute, and then he says:

"I guess, grandpa, it'll do."

"Then he tells me how other folks had invested not more'n me into the auty-mobile business in Detroit, and got rich—rich and owned hosses and carriages and houses and everything."

"And," he says, 'I'm int'rested into that very business, and if you'll trust that money to me I'll invest her for you. Maybe 'twon't make you rich, but I think I can promise you it'll make enough for you to live on.'

"Wa-al, I looks close into his eyes, and they was stiddy and clear and seems honest to me, so I puts out my hand and says:

"Young feller, the money's yourn."

"That's what I done"; and grandpa leaned back against the pillar and beamed.

"Did he promise?" asked aunty.

"He done so. He said it wasn't on my account he was takin' the trouble, but on yourn, 'cause of that there grandmother of his'n."

"I'd 'a' liked to have been able to do it for her," he says."

Aunty's eyes were moist.

"I guess you dast trust him all right, if he talks like that there." She nodded several times, pondering the matter. "You know I got a leetle money myself—three hunderd dollars, to bury me with. If your money'll keep us good, yours and mine together'll keep us better. To-morrow I'll git it out o' the bank, and we'll invest the whole thing."

Grandpa beamed more delightedly than ever.

"We'll do it, Mary, we'll do it. He says it'll be six months before we git any divyends; but we ain't so old we can't wait. *Six months!* And won't our children be s'prised—won't they jist!"

IV

At supper that night grandpa's son and daughter-in-law were again discussing the young man who had driven past the house in the morning—the one who was arrayed so modishly as to raise their mistrust.

"I seen him settin' on the hotel steps," announced James, "dressed fit to kill. Marthy, I bet he had them clothes made special for himself. And what d'ye s'pose he had stickin' into his tie? A di'mond bigger'n a shelled pea! And yaller shoes that come no higher'n his ankles; and sich socks! Marthy, them socks would 'a' stamped him a sharper, if nothin' else had. They was silk, and gray. B'lieve me or not, but I seen 'em close!"

"I wonder the town marshal don't put him into the lockup! Be you sure them clothes was made special for him?"

Here grandpa entered the conversation.

"Them clothes *was* made special for him, by a tailor; and they cost sixty-five dollars. And that ain't all—his shirts was made special, and they cost four fifty a shirt; and he laid out twenty-five dollars in that there wiggly straw hat."

"How come you to know so much about him?"

"Oh, him and me is friends. He's into the auty-mobile business—makes scads of money."

"That's what he *says*," interjected Martha. "Jim, you see the doors is locked tight to-night and the winders fastened!"

V

IN due course a beautifully engraved stock certificate arrived. Grandpa exhibited it to aunty surreptitiously, with the pride of possession.

"We're stockholders, Mary! I reckon there ain't more'n half a dozen of 'em in this here town. I guess this makes real folks of us, eh?"

Aunty held it in her hands to get the feel of the thing, and experienced all the sensations of the capitalist.

"I wonder how much it'll pay us," she mused.

"Enough—maybe five hundred dollars a year. The young feller said so."

"We kin live fine on that—fine!"

So passed the days; and each one was checked off on the calendar with business-like care, for its flitting brought nearer the dawn of happiness and independence for the old couple.

Finger-marks appeared on the certificate; it showed the soil of frequent handling. Indeed, grandpa's gnarled fingers were touching it more often than not, and aunty held it in her lap under her knitting for hours at a stretch. It was their talisman; for them it spelled a second youth; a freedom from daily supervision; a home of their own—and, besides, some little honor and credit and standing in the community, for the capitalist is a man apart in the village. Other men work for their money—his money works for him.

Frequently Martha and James alluded to grandpa's sharper friend, and read to him from the city newspaper descriptions of slick young fellows who, by wiles and stratagems, mulcted the credulous of their savings. All wore tailored suits, diamonds abounded in the fellowship, and silk socks were not unknown; but grandpa never wavered.

When five months were gone, signs of impatience manifested themselves in Grandpa Papkin. It was hard to wait.

"It's only a month now, Mary," he declared, "and I got forty dollars left. Let's you and me go over to the county seat and git married quiet like some day. If we git found out, my forty'll keep us till them divy-dends comes in. Let's go next Monday!"

"It don't seem right cautious," objected aunty. "Better wait till the money is right here in our pocket."

But Aunty Purvis's desire ran with grandpa's urging, so it was not difficult to overpersuade her; and the following Monday saw them united in the bonds of matrimony, after promises of secrecy wrung from license clerk and minister. There in the

pastor's back parlor, under the hanging lamp with the glass pendants, the old man kissed his bride shyly and called her wife.

Let it not be thought that Martha's uneasiness regarding grandpa's constant visits to Aunty Purvis was lessened by time; rather it was sharpened, and became more apparent to the old man. To him it seemed as if he were a straying rooster, and she were always trying to shoo him back into his own yard. But still he visited his wife daily, and his heart was young with autumnal romance.

James Papkin opened the conversation one evening when the promised day was distant but a week.

"Father, I been thinkin' about buyin' the Hillger eighty that lays next to my place."

"Um!" calculated grandpa. "Likely farm. How much does Hillger ask?"

"Twenty-three hundred."

"It's wuth it—every cent."

"I got twelve hundred cash. Now you got consid'able into the bank payin' you four per cent. Why not loan it to me on a mortgage? I'll give you six."

Grandpa was confounded. He coughed, he tugged nervously at his beard, he avoided his son's eye.

"Why, Jimmy," he stammered, "I'd be glad to loan it to you. Nobody I'd loan it to sooner! But—er—but, Jimmy, I ain't got no money into the bank."

"Ain't got no money into the bank!"

Grandpa shook his head.

"What you done with it?" James demanded sharply.

"Now, Jimmy," grandpa expostulated, "there ain't no call for you to git mad. It was my money. I earned it—"

"I ain't disputin' thet, but what I want to know is what in thunder you gone and done with it!"

"Invested it."

"Invested it! When? What into?"

"Nigh onto six months ago. It's in the auty-mobile manufacturin' business, and it's prob'ly a goin' to earn me more'n five hundred a year divy-dends."

James sat back in his chair, too smitten with astonishment, too filled with anger, for words. Then his back stiffened, and he faced his father, his face working.

"It was that slick feller with the silk socks!" he shouted. "That's who it was! He come here and done you out o' your money, that's what *he* done, and you went

and give him more'n a thousand dollars just like a country jay, that's what *you* done! I should have listened to Marthy. She said you was gittin' childish and needed lookin' after. You oughter have a guardeen, that's what. The idee! Throwin' all that good money to a sharper to buy di'monds and silk socks with!"

"Now, Jimmy," grandpa broke in nervously, "it ain't lost. Them divy-dends is goin' to begin comin' in a week, and Mary and me—"

He checked himself, realizing that he was making another and a still more damaging confession; but it was too late.

"Mary and you! Mary and you what?"

"It'll be enough for us to live on," said grandpa simply.

"Did you reckon you and that old woman was a goin' to marry?" James's voice was bitterly ironical.

"I reckon, James, that you ain't speakin' right to your father. That ain't no tone to use. And, James, I don't reckon we're goin' to marry, 'cause, James, we been married nigh a month."

James glared.

"And who do you reckon is goin' to support you and her? Ain't I got enough on my hands to look after my own fam'ly and you, without havin' another crowded in? Ain't I?"

"I guess you have, James; but Mary and me ain't goin' to be crowded in. We'll have our own house and our own money. We sha'n't be beholdin' to nobody. Our divy-dends'll be comin' in a week."

James stamped from the room, pale with rage, and grandpa could hear him roaring the news to Martha. Tears stood in his eyes, and his throat felt twisted and sore—sore like his heart—that he should be treated with such indignity by his own son.

"Seems as if old folks ain't got no right to *be*!" he whispered.

VI

JAMES PAPKIN and his wife conferred heatedly with Aunt Purvis's daughter. The upshot was an agreement that the families should regard the marriage of their respective parents as being wholly null, void, and without binding force or effect. Neither family would consent to keep the old couple together, or to contribute toward their support.

"Father'll live with us, and your mother'll live with you, same as usual, and

we won't have no nonsense!" James summed it up.

This ultimatum was conveyed to grandpa and his wife.

"Don't you worry, Mary, not a mite," grandpa consoled her. "Them divy-dends'll be comin' in less than a week, and then we kin snap our fingers at the whole kit and bilin' of 'em!"

From that day Grandpa Papkin all but took up his residence at the post-office.

"The money won't come till Tuesday," he told himself; "but it might, and I want to be here to git it first off."

On Tuesday he arose early, donned his Sunday best, and appeared at breakfast happy and confident.

"Divy-dends is comin' to-day, Jimmy," he explained, and James snorted scornfully.

The old man took his stand at the delivery window a full hour before the mail arrived, "to be there first." With his elbows on the sill, he peered expectantly through the grating. When the letters were distributed, and the postmaster stepped forward, he asked, his voice quivering with excitement:

"Anythin' for Ben Papkin?"

"Nope, not a thing this mail, grandpa."

For a minute the old fellow was staggered, but he bethought himself that other mails arrived that day. He inquired.

"Two more—twelve forty and three thutty," was the reply.

He sat on the office steps, not going home for dinner. The second mail brought him nothing, and his face lost something of its expression of confidence. He paced uneasily up and down, and mopped his forehead many times with a gaudy handkerchief.

"It's got to come!" he muttered. "The young feller *promised*. His eyes was honest. It's got to come!"

How the time dragged to three thirty and the last mail of the day! Yet, somehow, grandpa dreaded the hour. If the dividend check failed to come, what would he do? He tried to think it out, but the future was blank; he could not limn it in.

The bag arrived; he heard the postmaster sorting its contents, saw the line form at the window. This time he was not first; he feared to ask the question that meant so much—independence, a home, a wife, old age spent in comfort. But he must, he knew he must, and he forced his feet to carry him before the grating.

There his tongue refused its office, but the postmaster did not await the question.

"Nothin' for you, grandpa," he said cheerfully.

Grandpa bit his under lip, and made believe he failed to hear.

"What say?" he demanded.

"Nothin' for you."

So he had been tricked! Not only had he been robbed of his own store, but Auntie Purvis's little fund, the dollars that were to provide the sort of funeral she planned, had gone as well. And with the money had disappeared the dream of independence, the little home, the peaceful days to which they had looked forward together.

Grandpa Papkin's was a brave old spirit, and he did not groan aloud. With shoulders sagging, eyes dull, he tottered from the office, tottered up the road, tottered out of sight; and his years were multiplied and laid with crushing weight upon him.

The family were in bed when he stumbled up the walk and into the house—in bed, but not asleep.

"Let's see them divy-dends!" jeered his son.

At the cruelty of it grandpa crept up the stairs stifling a sob. But this was not the worst. Gibes he would bear; condemnation he could endure; but what would Auntie Purvis—no, Auntie Papkin, his wife—what would she say? He fell on his knees at the side of the bed, clutched his seamed old cheeks with gnarled fingers, and prayed that there would be no morning for him.

But he slept. After hours, nature demanded an end of his suffering, and eased his mind in the blankness of slumber.

After a time he started, raised his head, and listened. Vaguely, indistinctly, through the weight of sleep, he heard a clamor, a rhythmical thumping. In an instant he was fully awake, and all his misery surged back over him. The thumping continued, louder now.

"Somebody at the door," he muttered.

Feeling his way along the wall, he groped down the black stairs.

"Who's there?" he called.

"Jed Bright. Got somethin' for Grandpa Papkin. Shud 'a' brought it earlier, but I had to play the fiddle to the firemen's dance."

It was the postmaster. Grandpa tried to open the door, but his fumbling fingers refused to draw the bolt. Again and again he essayed futilely.

"James," he called at last, hoarsely, "come open the door!"

James, rubbing his eyes, stumbled out of his room and thrust the door open. Jed placed a long envelope in grandpa's hands.

"It's for you," he said. "Come by special delivery, so I brought it up myself. Couldn't git here sooner."

Grandpa tore open the envelope in the moonlight that streamed through the window, and drew out its contents. There was a brief letter, typewritten, but he did not wait to read it, for there was something else—a green slip of paper, oblong in shape. He held it near his eyes; then he sobbed aloud one great, deep sob of thankfulness. The divy-dend check was there—and it was enough.

There was one paragraph in the letter that grandpa's wife knows by heart. It said:

I'm making believe that I did this for my own grandmother.

To-day Grandpa Papkin and his wife live in a spick, span white cottage in the heart of the village; they own a horse and rig, and their days are happy. Grandpa is a figure in the community. Business men advise with him, and James, skeptical James—just listen to him:

"Father's a reemarkable man. Made all his money when he was nigh seventy years old. Auty-mobile manufacturer, he is, and one of the smartest business men in the county!"

Which shows that one never can tell.

THE MEETING

THOUGH Sleep and Death have each their separate ways,
At last they mingle in a devious maze,
Whence Life, bewildered—blind with fear or pain,
Strives to emerge, and always strives in vain.

William H. Hayne

EDITORIAL

THE POWERS AND THE BALKAN SITUATION

AT the beginning of the war in Turkey the concert of powers in Europe assumed serious mien and large concern, and issued pompous manifestoes in order to prevent the war. They failed, and so the little Christian states of Balkania girded up their loins and did what the greater nations had never been able to do—drove the Turk practically out of Europe. That was a war of Christianity, civilization, and humanity; a war that ought to have been fought, though the powers tried to prevent it.

As soon as that war was over the minor states quarreled among themselves over their spoils, and the powers let them fight it out. There was not even a serious effort to stop this second war, though it was inhuman, unchristian, and excuseless.

While this second war was in progress, with all its unparalleled horrors, with tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of lives being sacrificed, a mild-mannered disturbance was going on in Mexico. There was discomfort about traveling through the country; it was alleged that some scores of Americans had been killed in the last year or two; foreign holders of Mexican stocks were not getting regular dividends. Finally it was given out that European diplomacy had intimated that it was the business of the United States to keep order in Mexico, or else resign its Monroe Doctrine responsibilities and let Europe do the police work.

Needless to say, the United States government did not see matters that way. It will hardly be necessary for this country to apologize on behalf of Mexico, so long as the concert of Europe has such poor success in maintaining peace, progress, and comfort in the Balkan peninsula.

CONVERSATION VERSUS PERFORMANCE

MR. BRYAN, in his capacity as our leading antiimperialist, gave some shock to most people when he appeared as sponsor for a treaty by which Nicaragua is to be taken under an American protectorate. That is what it amounts to. Washington becomes the guarantor of Nicaraguan independence and integrity. We are to guarantee the little republic's debt, to supervise its foreign relations, and to have power to maintain peace and order in its territory. We are also to possess exclusive authority to use the Nicaraguan transcontinental canal route.

All of which may be shocking to antiimperialists who had supposed Mr. Bryan one of their number; but let it be remembered that Mr. Bryan is now Secretary of State of the United States. He faces facts, not theories; conditions, not academics. He takes note that we have the Panama Canal. We must protect it, or else fail to protect ourselves. To protect it means that in one way or another we must make certain that no European country — or

NOTE—All editorials in this department were written before the end of July.

Asiatic, either—will attempt a footing on this North American continent south of Canada.

The minor republics have long been tempting bait for adventurers and exploiters. It is very necessary that they should be taken out of the realm of doubt and danger. How better than through this treaty with one of them? Probably we shall have like arrangements with all Central America before long; and it will be far better for Central America if we do.

Perhaps it is not very good for us to assume this suzerainty. In that regard it is easy to sympathize with Mr. Bryan's earlier sentiments and enthusiasms. It is very easy to understand that Mexico, carved into a bunch of States with two Senators apiece and corresponding groups of Representatives, would be rather an undesirable addition to our Union. So, probably, would the republics of Central America. But what are we to do about it? It would also be nicer to live in a world in which there was no sin, no temptation, no avarice, no envy; but we don't live in such a world. We do the best we can, as individuals; we shall have to do the same as nations.

THE NEW BILL FOR COAL

PENNSYLVANIA has levied a new tax on coal, and, as before, the consumer will settle the bill. The tax is levied on the coal companies by a law enacted by the present Legislature; but it is affixed in such a way that all the users of hard fuel in the Eastern and Middle States may as well make up their minds that they will be invited to meet it.

Indeed, the companies have already written the assessment into the face of their statements. They ask for the amount of their bill "plus the tax of two and one-half per cent levied by the State of Pennsylvania."

Only a small percentage of the coal mined in Pennsylvania is sold in that State. In selling every pound marketed outside the State, the coal companies pass on the tax to the consumer. It is a "hold-up" of all the rest of the coal-users, who have already been assessed by the coal-carrying railroads. It capitalizes once more the monopoly of hard coal which the Keystone State possesses, in a fashion that seems pretty nearly insolent. It is likely to give new emphasis to the demand for a transfer of the mines from private ownership to government control. It will, one would think, make coal-consumers hot with indignation in any month of the year.

ALONG THE UPWARD ROAD

THE other day the Interior Department at Washington announced the grant of permits for the development of one hundred and fifty thousand horse-power in hydro-electricity by a California corporation. At the same time it was stated that other projects are shaping which look to development of more than half a million horse-power in a little group of undertakings in that State alone.

Just a few years ago it was positively declared that if the government tried to supervise water-power development, it would kill enterprise. The developers of great industrial projects would not submit to being bossed. Likewise, we were told at the same time that government control of forestry would ruin forests; that government control and leasing of coal lands was quite unthinkable; that government regulation of railroads would ruin us all.

We have come a long way, in a very short time, from that epoch. To-day everybody accepts the plan of government regulation in all these departments. Mr. Lane, the Secretary of the Interior, has gone off on a trip to Alaska to perfect his knowledge of the situation, in the expectation that Congress will shortly order a system of government-owned railways in the Territory. It has been made very plain that Alaskan development will be atrophied until the government constructs the railroads on which progress is absolutely dependent; so the President, the Departments, and everybody else with information have recommended that the government should build them.

There will be some disappointments, some difficulties, some harsh wrenchings, in the process of getting individual plans and community ideals readjusted to these modern conceptions; but on the whole everybody will be a great deal better for accepting the situation amiably. We must accept it, anyhow; it has arrived and taken possession.

GATUN LAKE FILLING AT LAST

A RECENT issue of the *Canal Record* brought news that the spillways on the Gatun dam had been closed, and that the water from the Chagres and confluent streams was henceforward to be impounded until Gatun Lake should be raised to its permanent level.

The Panama Canal consists largely of Gatun Lake, which is to be eighty-five feet above the sea. At each end of it will be a flight of locks, through which ships will be raised up to the lake level and let down again to the Atlantic or the Pacific. The whole question about the canal, in an engineering way, is whether this lake is safe—that is, whether the great dam that had been built to hold it back will do the business under all the circumstances of tropical floods and freshets; whether the stratification, the composition, the liability to earthquakes, or anything else, will make that great dam dangerous.

Nobody has ever worried much about the Culebra cut. That was merely a question of taking out more and more earth and rock, as more and more slipped in; money and shovels and people would be certain to accomplish that in time. But the dam was different. At the beginning there was sharp difference of opinion how it ought to be built. The plan finally adopted represented the judgment of the experts after most careful study. Everybody hopes they were right; but the fact remains that the dam is the one uncertainty about the canal, and that there is going to be no such thing as assurance about it until it has stood the test of real use for a considerable period.

At any rate, the canal is almost ready to carry the first ship through from ocean to ocean. It is not only the greatest engineering achievement of man, but it is the biggest bid the American nation has ever made for a place in the thick of the complications of world politics. We have the canal on our hands, for better or worse, and we are going to live up to it.

ARMING THE TRANSATLANTIC LINERS

CROSSING the ocean on a war-ship is a novelty to which few civilian travelers have ever looked forward, but it seems entirely probable as an incident of the near future. The newest feature of the latest German liner to enter the transatlantic passenger service is a spacious and luxurious Roman bath, but it is reported that the big English boats now in building are to

have as their most notable novelty an equipment of high-powered rifles such as are used on armored cruisers. It appears that as a part of the naval policy of preparedness the British government is already installing formidable guns on some of the most important liners that sail under its flag. The boats first chosen are those of greater carrying capacity, which might be employed most advantageously as troop-ships.

It is nearly a century since an armed merchantman carrying the British flag entered one of our ports; but if the present plans are not delayed or changed it is possible that before this reaches the reader a modern passenger-ship may be seen coming up from Sandy Hook with the muzzles of her guns showing over her black sides.

The relations between the British government and the great English steamship companies are no closer than those between the Kaiser's administrators and the shipmasters whose vessels sail from Hamburg and Bremen. It is easy to foresee that if the naval authorities of Germany consider that there is any profit gained in arming the great passenger fleet that carries the Union Jack, the auxiliary thus established will soon be imitated across the North Sea. Indeed, all other maritime countries are likely to follow suit; and partly for this very reason the innovation seems to be one of doubtful benefit. It looks like a needless extension of the possible field of naval hostilities, involving dangers of a serious sort.

We think that peaceable passengers will prefer to travel on unarmed liners.

A WORD FOR THE SPLIT SKIRT

A SHOCKED world is hiding its eyes with its hands—and peeking through its fingers—in horror at the immodest split skirt and the thin petticoat.

As a matter of fact, both the split skirt and the petticoatless costume have much to recommend them, from a woman's point of view. The skirt, with its naughty little slit at the side, which admits not only of freedom of movement, but of the gaze of the passer-by, is no more immodest than past vagaries of fashion, and has the virtue of being at least an affair of material comfort to the wearer.

Once upon a time the women wore hoop-skirts which bobbed up and down with the breeze, and exposed not only the ankles of the wearer, but goodness knows what besides in the way of lingerie. Then came the bustle, which, when one really comes down to it, was no more or less than a most vulgar accentuation of a certain portion of the anatomy. Then came the tight basque, which showed off the form with unerring accuracy, suggesting what it did not reveal. All these freaks of fashion were manifestly vulgar, unnecessary, and unsightly.

When tight skirts force women to remedy their crippled condition, they are charged with immodesty. Their attempt to make the general effect more comfortable and sensible is called bold.

Instead of praising them for possessing sufficient originality and courage deliberately to slit the skirts that made them hobble about like idiots, there are some who hoot, gaze, and poke fun at them.

That it is the women who have to wear the skirts is a fact that does not seem to appeal to the large majority of the stronger sex—the Peeping Toms who throw the mud. They never tried to wear a skirt.

This is the twentieth century, and women have passed out of the veil-

wearing stage. The split skirt—or, more correctly speaking, the splitting of the skirt—is the unconscious practical manifestation of the trend of the time, and an unofficial announcement to the world at large that women no longer dress for the delectation of the male eye alone. Whether it is for his good or for his bad, they have announced themselves as determined to have a reasonable amount of comfort and freedom. They have cast off responsibility for the real or alleged lure of their arms and their legs, and have become human beings. The slit is a little declaration of independence all by itself.

So it seems as though it were up to the men to get the habit of seeing women dress comfortably and naturally.

AMERICAN CARELESSNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

IT is dreadfully trite, of course, to observe that Americans are reckless of human life; but it needs to be said just as often as horrors like that factory fire in Binghamton remind us of the facts.

There was a general shiver in the autumn of 1910, when a factory fire in Newark cost twenty-four lives, and better conditions were loudly demanded. Less than four months later that fire was worse than duplicated in the heart of New York, when one hundred and forty-seven lives were sacrificed in the Triangle holocaust. Then New York, State and city, set about to legislate such things out of the possibility of happening; and with what result? Fifty deaths in another fire of exactly the same kind at Binghamton.

In each case the scene of the disaster was a clothing factory; in each most of the victims were women and girls; in each there was the same story of utterly inadequate precaution for prevention of fire or for escape from it.

Year by year, decade by decade, this record is written over and over again. American railroads kill and maim their tens of thousands; American mines, American theaters, American factories, American sweat-shops, claim their toll of death and destruction in a degree that no other country begins to parallel. It will not do to say these things are providential. They result from our national recklessness about human life.

They dig their coal from far greater depths in Britain and Belgium, but they don't kill one miner where we kill half a score. No other great civilized country has fire losses, in property or in life, to compare with ours. It is both wasteful and wicked, and before we can flatter ourselves that this is a land of enlightenment we must learn how to remedy these discreditable conditions.

THE ADVERTISING PROFESSION

NOT so very long ago it was presumed that in trade and barter, in order that one side might make a profit, the other must be cheated. It was not thought that both could be the gainers. The law said "*caveat emptor*"—let the buyer beware, as if every transaction was a skin game on one side or the other.

A relic of that curious old notion is found in the disposition to study national balances of trade and to assume that the nation is richer which has the biggest "favorable balance"—meaning that it sends out the most goods and receives proportionately the least. As a matter of fact, the nation that buys most is simply showing itself so rich that it is able to buy what it wants—and to enjoy the advantages of possessing what it needs.

To get back to the notion that one side or the other must lose in every trade—of course it isn't true. In almost all trades each side disposes of something it wants less in return for something it wants more. If it were not so, trade would make the community poor, whereas it makes it rich by fitting people's possessions the better to their needs.

In the same generation in which the world has come fully to realize this fact, it has been studying methods of bringing together, at the least expense, the two people who are going to be mutually benefited by the trade. After much experience and experiment it has found that advertising is the best way. That's why advertising pays. It is, scientifically engineered, the most economical method of bringing together the two sides of a potential transaction.

That is the economic justification of advertising. The justification would not be complete except on condition that the advertising be honest, straightforward, sincere, and genuinely intended to do a service to both sides of the transaction it aims to make possible.

This idea of the real function of advertising was developed most effectively at the convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of America, held in Baltimore not long ago. Experts in the business came from all over the continent, and the key-note of the addresses was "honesty and service." Advertising is a huge force in business, because it is the most economical discoverer, organizer, developer of demand. Advertising has made the buyer familiar with price standards to such an extent that extortion is seldom possible. The housewife habitually buys by the advertisements, and she knows so much, from them, about what things are and should be worth that she isn't likely to be misled very far.

In this regard a service has been done whose importance is not at all fully appreciated.

CHURCH UNION IN THE DOMINION

THE Governor of Kansas caused some amusement among light-minded folk a couple of years ago, when he suggested that a consolidation of the evangelical churches in the small towns and rural districts would be extremely sensible. Kansas took up the idea and made some progress with it in rather an informal way.

It has remained for western Canada, with its problems of rapid development and sparse population, to effect an official merger. The general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada recently decided, by a vote of three to one, in favor of a denominational merger with the Methodists and the Congregationalists. Both Methodists and Congregationalists had already given their approval, so the plan is certain of effectiveness. The Anglican Church in the Dominion has formed a Church Unity League which is explained as a tentative move toward entering into the work of consolidation.

So long as the average member of an evangelical denomination could not accurately define the differences between his own and other organizations, and so long as these differences, even when defined, are of very little importance to the average member, it certainly seems that the Canadians have taken a sensible step. Western Canada had found that without such an amalgamation it would either have fewer churches than it really needed, or else more than it could possibly support. The sensible course was to consolidate and get enough churches for the community's needs at a price the community could pay.

HIGH LIGHTS OF LAWN-TENNIS

LEADING FIGURES AND CONTRASTING STYLES OF PLAY IN A GAME WHICH HAS BECOME A GREAT INTERNATIONAL SPORT

BY HERBERT REED

AMERICAN tennis is based on the genius of pace—until recent years too frequently unsustained when pitted against the conservation of energy that marked the English brand of play. It was failure to sustain pace in America that lost the Davis Cup to England. It was pace, in the persons of the Australasians, that carried the famous trophy on its long journey "down under." It was pace that so long defended it, and the lack of pace that finally lost it once more to England. It is pace in the person of Maurice E. McLoughlin that this year has astonished the more conservative Englishmen, and it was pace in the persons of McLoughlin and young R. Norris Williams, the Harvard freshman, that has, at the time when this article is written, brought the American team through the preliminary matches for the Davis Cup.

But—and herein lies the guarantee of the splendid future of the game in the United States—the new pace is sustained, and above all it is controlled. Americans love always to be attacking. In the early days of international competition they were always attacking. But the conservation of energy exhibited by such wonderful players as the two Dohertys triumphed over America's flashing speed; and with the retirement of Malcolm D. Whitman, at the time the only American player whose pace was dependable, America temporarily lost her tennis prestige.

Much of the tennis played in this country was sound for years after the loss of the Davis Cup, but with the exception of the veteran William A. Larned, it lacked pace. Even in the case of Larned, one of the most

scintillatingly brilliant men who ever stood on a court, the pace was erratic. There were games, and even sets, in which perhaps no player who ever wielded racket could have stood against Larned; but even so great a player as he too often dropped away toward the end of a hard match and played unevenly, to his discomfiture.

The great revival in pace came about through the work of the Californians, McLoughlin, Bundy, and Long, who had learned their tennis on the asphalt courts of the Pacific coast, where speed was an essential from the start. Little more than boys, they came to the East and startled the more conservative players of that section with a dazzling speed that had hardly been dreamed of. The newcomers were not seasoned, however, were not as rich in experience as men like Larned, and knew infinitely less about the use of the strategic positions in the court. They smashed irresistibly, they drove, forehand and backhand, but their repertory of strokes was not complete; and although terrors overhead, they were not finished tennis-players.

They had the one quality that stands out supreme to-day in American tennis, and has for so long been a feature of the play of the Australasians, Norman E. Brookes and Anthony F. Wilding. But Brookes and Wilding were older and wiser. They, too, had pace, but they were field-generals as well, with the result that the two young Californians, McLoughlin and Long, failed in their attempt to bring back the Davis Cup.

In the case of McLoughlin, however, it was apparent from the start that he was a champion in the making, that once his ter-

NOTE—The illustrations accompanying this article are engraved from photographs by the Sport and General Illustrations Company, London; Paul Thompson, New York; Brown Brothers, New York; and Edwin Levick, New York.

rific service—the second ball practically as fast as the first—could be brought under control, and his entire game aged somewhat, there would be none to stand against him. McLoughlin lived up to his early promise, and although beaten from time to time by some good men, eventually achieved the title of American champion.

Two qualities of the real champion McLoughlin has shown aside from his pace—good nature under heavy fire, and the ability to make telling strokes with absolute accuracy under the lash of sheer necessity. He is never beaten until the last stroke is made, and the difficulty of the stroke that is to bring him on even terms with an opponent is no guarantee that it will not be made with the same terrific force that

marks all his other strokes, and with a deadly accuracy that is disheartening to the man across the net.

Thus, in the case of McLoughlin and with most of the newer school, the old

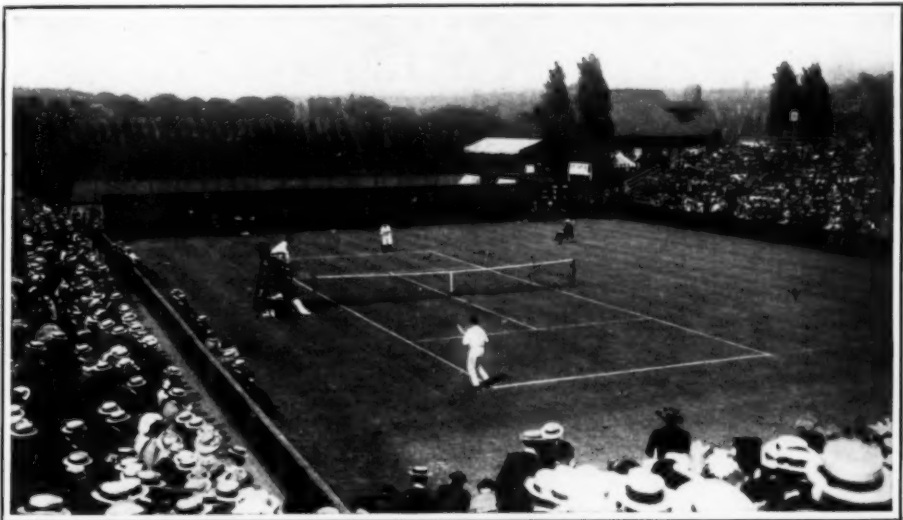
English system whose watchword was "let the other man make mistakes" has given way to the American system, which shares with such Australasians as Brookes and Wilding the slogan:

"Make the other man make mistakes."

The sustained severity of McLoughlin's service drives his opponent clear out of the court — Brookes and Wilding are the only men who ever faced the Californian and were able to stay inside the base-line — gives him his rush to half court or to the net, and the point is gained with an overhead smash or a cross-court volley that is un-



ANTHONY F. WILDING, THE NEW ZEALANDER
WHO HOLDS THE ENGLISH LAWN-
TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP



AN INTERNATIONAL CUP TIE—THE MATCH IN WHICH M'LOUGHLIN (AMERICA) DEFEATED RICE (AUSTRALIA)
AT THE WEST SIDE TENNIS CLUB, NEW YORK, IN JUNE LAST



FRIEDRICH WILHELM RAHE, OF
THE GERMAN DAVIS CUP TEAM



HEINRICH KLEINSCHROTH, OF THE
GERMAN DAVIS CUP TEAM



OSCAR KREUZER, OF THE GERMAN
DAVIS CUP TEAM

playable. It is a case of forcing tactics pure and simple, showing severity combined with head-work that was too often absent in the champion's early days on the courts.

McLoughlin is not unbeatable even now, but we are considering here the *type* of his game; and no severer test of that type has ever been made than in the opening round of the recent British championships, when McLoughlin defeated H. Roper Barrett in a hard five-set match. On another court than Wimbledon, and in other circumstances, the Englishman might not have proved such a hard nut to crack; but Barrett at Wimbledon, and facing a volleying game, is no easy opponent. In the recent match the Englishman played what was probably the game of his life—the terrific driving game that has many times played such havoc with the American overhead style.

Barrett is a master of strategy, and he used every bit of it against the American champion. His strokes were perfect examples of the style he affects—the drop and toss, the hard drive down the line, the puzzling low service. Throughout it was an attempt to coax the American into mistakes. McLoughlin was practically new to this type of game, and for a time could not handle the ground strokes; but in the end he solved Barrett's style and came triumphantly through, his type of game vindicated.

It was the triumph of supreme pace—thoroughly controlled, for the most part—and it was a vindication of typical American tennis.

To the advancement and the probable eventual standardization of American tournament tennis, R. Norris Williams is contributing no less than McLoughlin.

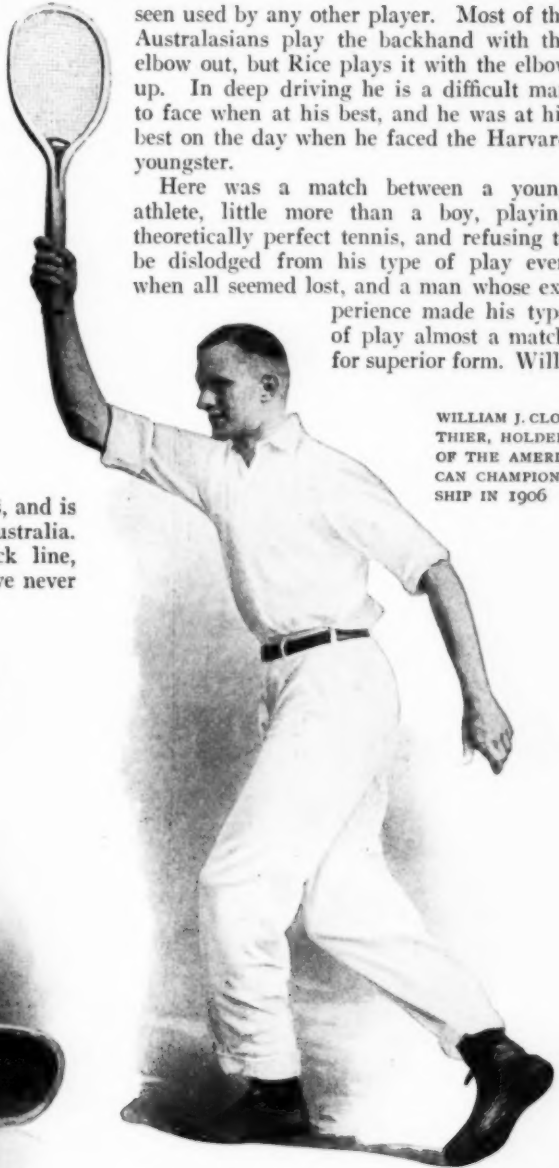
Trained abroad, and carefully coached, this young man has even more finish than the champion, if not such great pace overhead. Where McLoughlin maintains pace through sheer tremendous drive, Williams sustains it by high speed, perfect technique, and court generalship of the highest order.

There has been no match in recent years of such absorbing interest as his victory—coming from behind—over Horace Rice, of the Australasian team, in the cup ties at the West Side Club. Rice is a man rich in experience. He has represented New South Wales for more than twenty years, and is still one of the best players in Australia. His attack begins from the back line, and he has a backhand that I have never

seen used by any other player. Most of the Australasians play the backhand with the elbow out, but Rice plays it with the elbow up. In deep driving he is a difficult man to face when at his best, and he was at his best on the day when he faced the Harvard youngster.

Here was a match between a young athlete, little more than a boy, playing theoretically perfect tennis, and refusing to be dislodged from his type of play even when all seemed lost, and a man whose experience made his type of play almost a match for superior form. Will-

WILLIAM J. CLOTHIER, HOLDER OF THE AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1906



THEODORE R. PELL, SEVERAL TIMES HOLDER OF THE AMERICAN INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP



iams, playing constantly to Rice's backhand, maintained a stout heart throughout. Although more than once in serious danger of defeat, he made every stroke as he had been taught, confident that he would prevail in the end. It was one of the finest bits of courageous tennis ever seen on any court. Toward the close Williams's natural and acquired pace came back to him, and in the last few games he was once more in



HAROLD H. HACKETT, CAPTAIN
OF THE AMERICAN DAVIS
CUP TEAM OF 1913

his topmost form, with his own wonderful backhand drives and placing shots working to perfection.

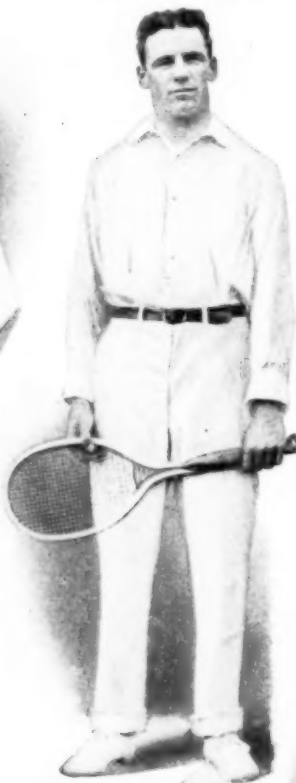
Next to America, with its McLoughlin, its Williams, its Bundy, and its Wallace F. Johnson, the disciples of pace in recent years have been the Australasians and the French, although the French temperament has led to more audacious use of pace than is the case "down under." Norman E. Brookes was the first of the Australasians to take up the severe American service; and it was not long, under the tuition of Dr. W. V. Eaves, before he had worked up a pace that reminded one of our own Larned at his best. He was "ripe" in 1905, and in that year was an absolute puzzle to such

well-known English players as Riseley, Hillyard, Gore, and Ball-Greene.

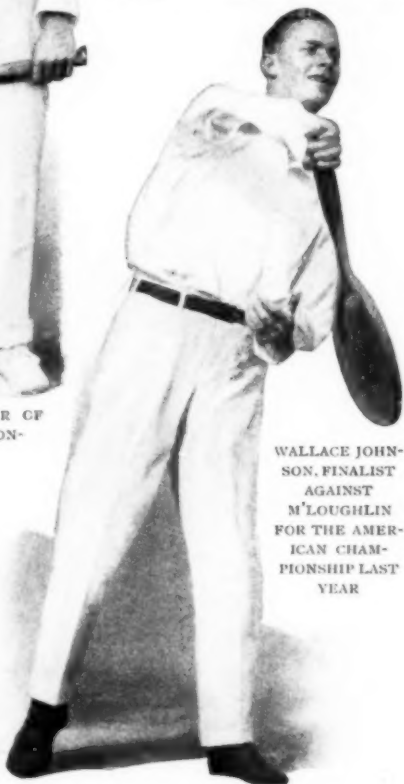
Brookes is an example of what an all-round athlete can do with tennis, resembling in this respect our own Robert D. Wrenn. Brookes is a first-class golfer, was one of the finest schoolboy bowlers in Australia, and is to-day a keen motorist.

A. F. Wilding, who defeated McLoughlin for the British championship, is a New Zealander who has taken up his permanent residence in England, and who will hereafter play for that country. In the days of Australasian supremacy he was a fitting partner for Brookes. His play is strictly of the New Zealand brand, for he learned his game in Christchurch, in that country, and is one of the exponents of what is known as the "natural New Zealand grip."

He is one of the best-equipped men, physically, in the tennis ranks. He never requires a rest—and he has played in blinding heat—and

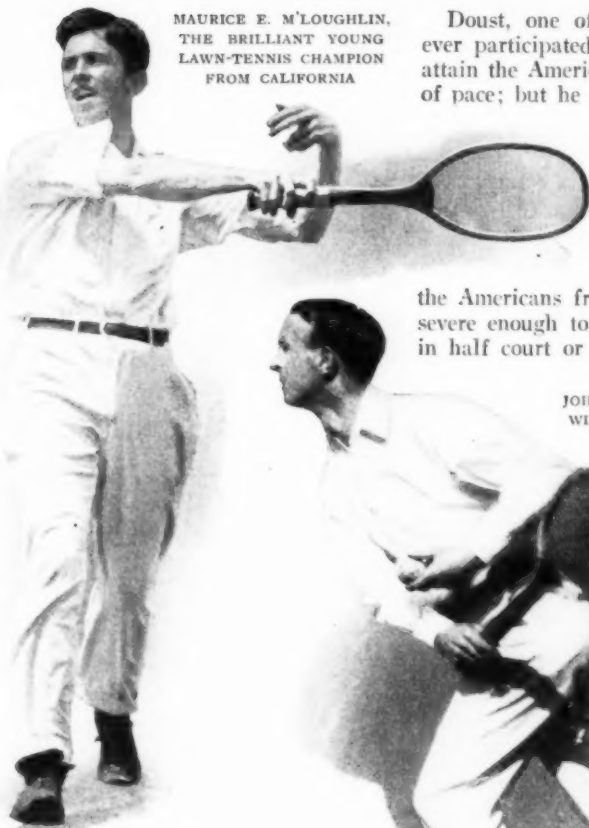


BEALS C. WRIGHT, HOLDER OF
THE AMERICAN CHAMPION-
SHIP IN 1905



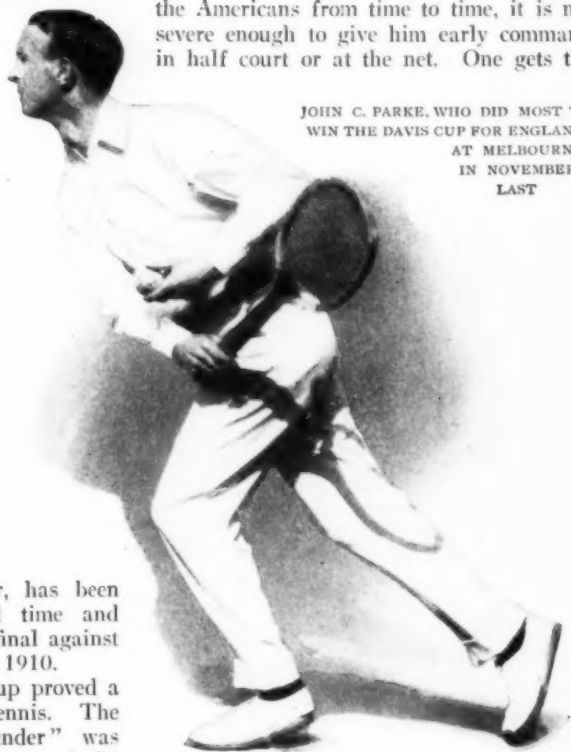
WALLACE JOHN-
SON, FINALIST
AGAINST
M'LOUGHLIN
FOR THE AMER-
ICAN CHAM-
PIONSHIP LAST
YEAR

MAURICE E. M'LOUGHLIN,
THE BRILLIANT YOUNG
LAWN-TENNIS CHAMPION
FROM CALIFORNIA



Doust, one of the best sportsmen who ever participated in any game, has yet to attain the American standard in the matter of pace; but he is a sound player, not too old to continue improving. There is usually very little waste effort in his work, but while he has a teasing service, with a very low bound, which bothered the Americans from time to time, it is not severe enough to give him early command in half court or at the net. One gets the

JOHN C. PARKE, WHO DID MOST TO
WIN THE DAVIS CUP FOR ENGLAND
AT MELBOURNE
IN NOVEMBER
LAST



while usually a quick starter, has been known to come from behind time and again, as was the case in the final against Beals Wright at Wimbledon in 1910.

The capture of the Davis Cup proved a great blessing to Australian tennis. The average man from "down under" was hardly aware of the supreme test of the game until the first visit of the Americans, Beals Wright and F. B. Alexander, in quest of the cup in 1908. With Brookes and Wilding no longer available for international matches, the honor of Australasia has devolved upon Rice, upon Stanley N. Doust, and upon A. B. Jones. The last-named is a fine all-round player, and his work in doubles, with Doust, against M'Loughlin and Hackett in the cup tie in New York, stamped him as one of the best doubles players in the world. His record in singles is better than merely good, but he was unable to show his singles style in America, owing to illness.

impression of ease from his work, but not of the "sting" that marks the best American players, which includes even better overhead work than even Beals Wright used to produce, and the sharp driving for the corners.

England and the colonies, and eventually the United States, will have to keep an eye on the Continent in future. Both France and Germany, and especially the former, are turning out formidable players, whose work on covered courts is adding pace to their game, just as the asphalt courts of California developed speed in the young experts from the Pacific coast.

Gobert and Laurentz are now in the very first class, outside of France as well as at home. These two Frenchmen are natural players, and have had plenty of work the year round, not to mention the best of professional coaching on covered courts. They soon found that on the hard surface the cut strokes were of little value, and so promptly took to driving, which has made for tremendous pace in their play.

The beginnings of tennis in France were made under considerable difficulty, for the French not the time for recreation available to the English or American schoolboy and collegian. Military service is also a difficult factor to contend

with. This means, of course, that the general spread of the game must be fairly slow, although a chosen few have come rapidly to the front.

It was not until 1900 that tennis in France became anything more than a pleasant way to spend an afternoon or a



WILLIAM A. LARNED, SEVEN TIMES HOLDER OF THE AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP AND ONE OF THE FAMOUS FIGURES OF TENNIS HISTORY



R. NORRIS WILLIAMS (AMERICA) AND STANLEY N. DOUST (AUSTRALIA), PLAYERS IN THE DAVIS CUP MATCHES OF JUNE LAST IN NEW YORK

holiday. The best players of that day were the brothers Vacherot, Aymé, Worth, and Lebreton. It was this group that first took up professional coaching, engaging T. Burke, who had had many years of experience, to teach them really scientific tennis. Burke's work was later carried on by Marshall and Cowdrey, but the lack of international matches proved a considerable drawback.

But it remained for Maurice Germot and Max Decugis to put French tournament tennis really



MAX DECUGIS, OF THE FRENCH
DAVIS CUP TEAM

on its feet, and with the aid of Gobert and Laurentz, the French team soon became highly formidable. Decugis played a great deal in England, and at the age of nineteen began to appear in international events. He defeated Major Ritchie, one of the best of the English tournament players, in 1902, and soon afterward won the German championship and the London covered court championship at Queens. With Germot as a partner he played in the Olympic Games at Athens, and this same pair appeared for the first time in the Davis Cup matches at Wimbledon. Neither man, however, was accustomed to playing on turf, and they failed to make much of a showing.

All the Frenchmen of the first flight are gifted with pacc, and are rapidly developing it still further, so that

it is the key-note of French tennis to-day, and when under control should prove as effective as that of the first half-dozen Americans. Gobert is perhaps the most serious student of the game in his country. He works out his system of play most carefully, and has learned in the last two years to steady down in his matches and sustain the pace that he showed only in flashes in his earlier play.

This young player is six feet three inches tall, and he uses every inch of his height in his severe service. He

formerly had a weak point in his ground strokes, but these he has recently improved, and he is steadily rounding out his game. He is, indeed, somewhat in the position of McLoughlin a few years ago.

Laurentz, an even younger player, is more of a chance-taker. His game is prettier to watch, but he has

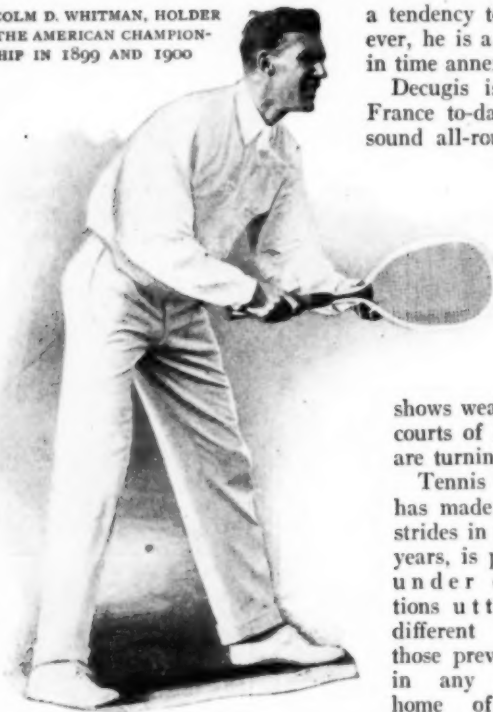


ANDRÉ H. GOBERT, OF THE FRENCH
DAVIS CUP TEAM



C. P. DIXON, OF THE ENGLISH
DAVIS CUP TEAM

MALCOLM D. WHITMAN, HOLDER
OF THE AMERICAN CHAMPION-
SHIP IN 1899 AND 1900



a tendency to be erratic. Without doubt, however, he is a coming French champion, and may in time annex other titles.

Decugis is the foremost apostle of pace in France to-day. Germany stands by Kreuzer, a sound all-round player, and by Froitzheim, but the Frenchman is probably the better man. Decugis's service is not only severe but steady, and his slashing game is supported by excellent generalship. His backhand is quite as strong as his forehand, and his smash is absolutely unplayable. It is only in low volleying that he

shows weakness from time to time. The sand courts of France, and the covered courts, too, are turning out men to be reckoned with.

Tennis in South Africa, where the game has made great strides in recent years, is played under conditions utterly different from those prevailing in any other home of the game. Johan-

nesburg, is the South African headquarters of the game, and on the courts there the ball bounces to an unusual height, and the light is almost blinding. The courts, too, are slippery, and the local players, notably Rintoul, Lamb, and Davis, do a deal of sliding. Anthony F. Wilding, who has been something of a tennis pilgrim, won a championship at Johannesburg, but he confesses to have found the conditions difficult in the extreme.

To return once more to the pace of the American game. One of the best examples of it in its early stages, before it was controlled and sustained, was in the play of Karl Behr, who figured in the Davis Cup matches of 1907.

Here was a man who played the forcing game that McLoughlin has so vastly improved and steadied during the last few years. Behr was exceedingly fast on his feet, and he almost invariably rushed for the net following his service. When his system was working at highest speed, and before he dropped into one of those peculiar lapses that marked a great deal of American play at that time, he was practically unbeatable. His service was severe, and he volleyed, and volleyed hard at every opportunity. Both forehand and backhand were sound, indeed, as strokes; but they were erratic, and he had not enough reserve to reinforce his great speed and his fine volleying.



NORMAN BROOKES, FOR YEARS THE FORE-
MOST OF AUSTRALIAN TENNIS EXPERTS

Behr was a man who came up to the top very fast, and almost as quickly dropped away for a time. He is still a factor of prominence in American tennis, but others have passed him. Like many another, he has been unable to sustain pace and control, and so does not appear in the ranks of those to whom America looks for a continued forward place in the tennis world.

To be certain, then, of America's future on the courts, it is only necessary to study the play of Maurice E. McLoughlin, R. Norris Williams, Wallace F. Johnson, Thomas C. Bundy, and the first flight of the ranking list. Nearly every name spells pace, and nearly every name spells youth.

A multitude of promising players are entering the arena, and periodically some new

star looms up on the horizon. A notable one is William Johnston, the eighteen-year-old California schoolboy who recently made his debut in the Eastern States at the famous Longwood tournament, signaling his first match on grass courts by defeating so well-known a performer as Gustave F. Touchard.

Just this year the work of the professional has begun to be felt in the United States. Charles E. Haggett, the English "pro" of the West Side Tennis Club, in New York, has already done wonders with some of the club members, and his aid was of great value to the American Davis Cup team. The effect of professional coaching on the tennis of the future will be well worth watching.

THE DEEP SPRING IN THE EVERGREEN FOREST

Who will turn and enter the still forest?
 Who will seek and taste the fabled spring?
 Cares and competitions of the market
 Leave a little while, nor hither bring
 Hot ambition;
 These from off thy burdened shoulders fling.

Enter then at once the leisured coolness
 Where the columned branches sway and soar;
 Though thou live amid the stony highways
 Of a trading city's pauseless roar,
 Turn; the forest
 Spreads its fragrant mazes round thy door.

Rest thy senses and revive thy spirit
 In the cool and everlasting shade
 Of a thought that turns to things immortal
 Where a little pause of heart is made,
 And a green hope
 Grows within the soul, not doomed to fade.

Part the branches, seek among the mosses
 Till that spring thou find, most deep, most clear,
 Of the practise of the mighty Presence,
 Consciousness of godhead present here.
 Living water!
 Quench the dusty thirst of many a year!

Spring of health, clear spring of saner living,
 Ever in the heart thou slakest rise
 Fortitudes, serenities, devotions,
 All those grave and great realities
 That so blithely
 Mock the wisdom of the worldly-wise.

Should the morrow trouble and harass thee,
 Come again at even, comrade mine,
 To the blue spring in the balsam forest,
 Whereunto the best of earthly wine,
 Dimly sparkling,
 Fades into a cup of lifeless brine.

Sarah N. Cleghorn

ONE IN A MILLION

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

AUTHOR OF "JERRY GALLEGHER," ETC.

AS if something long suppressed in her heart now abruptly forced its way to expression, Katherine interrupted the give-and-take of their discussion by exclaiming, in a tone of passionate emotion that thrilled Carroll Palmer:

"Oh, but you simply don't know the facts! You don't know, I tell you! If you had helped as many diseased, doomed-before-birth children to enter the squalor and poison and poverty of this Gehenna of a city as I have, I think you would feel it better that they should never be born; or, if born, that they shouldn't be helped to prolong the hopeless struggle of the useless, wasted, ugly lives that fester together over there!"

She pointed through the open window eastward. Far-spread below were myriads of lights, crisscrossing, splashing, starring, and suffusing the murky night with spots, points, patterns, words, and amorphous gushes of sulfurous yellow, glaring crimson, sickly white, and exotic, morbid hues of lavender and mauve. This delirium of artificial illumination merged into a livid glow, like a leprosy, on the face of the eastern sky. Multitudinous sounds jarred the hot, heavy midsummer air. Inarticulate, occult voices seemed uttering sighs and groans and cries, quivering with some uncomprehended message and burdened with the mystery of pain.

Palmer sighed and looked wistfully at his brooding companion. The burden lay too heavy on her, he thought; and unnecessarily, too, for she had assumed it wrongly, he believed. But this thought passed away before a deeper one.

"Don't let what we call facts get too much in our way, Katherine," he said.

Then his voice rose, surcharged with the force of his own innate convictions, for his whole being instinctively responded to the stir of his companion's spirit. Over her

bent head, above the book-shelves and piano, was a picture of the Madonna, softly irradiated by the rose-shaded light; her face mysteriously smiling upon the Child that reached its arms to her, while the Magi, in kingly vestments, and the poor shepherds, in coats of skins, stood about.

"I admit, of course, that we must eliminate human unfitnes; only let's be careful of the methods. Don't the great ones of the earth often come out of what we call the depths? If only one in a million is ever born to play a great part, it's worth all we do to save the million to give the one his chance. And you may have it in your power to help that one to live and do his work."

Palmer checked himself abruptly. Was he talking to a person sincerely devoted to her work, or to a woman moved by a whim, following a fad? He did not know, and he feared.

"I'm boring you," he said. "You've heard me rant like this before."

She gave him a singular look, and arose, saying:

"Yes, I've remembered it. One in a million? Heavy odds against us! Well, let's on to the dance, and forget eugenics, and all the other ologies and isms, for one night, anyhow."

She caught up her hat. Palmer lay back in his chair and relaxed; yet he felt a queer assurance that the inner conflict of wills which the discussion had disguised was approaching its climax. It had been proceeding in a desultory, undeclared fashion for many months. Now that he was fully conscious of it—however it might be with Katherine—he must and would conclude it. The thought made him stir, and lit a fire in his eyes.

Conscious of Palmer's mood, partly sharing its nature, indeed, Katherine posed before a mirror, apparently absorbed in a

supreme effort to achieve perfection in the pinning on of her hat. Her strong, round arms and capable hands seemed weaving some mystic spell essential to the ritual of the dressing-table.

As she tilted her head here and there, soft gleams came and went amid the masses of her bronze-gold hair. She pirouetted on heels four inches high. Her yellow silken gown clung delicately to her tall, lithe figure, or fell in sweeping curves. Her dark, deep-set eyes, with their long, black lashes and dusky, arching brows, gave to her gleaming, rose-and-gold reflection a bizarre, charmingly exotic aspect—as would an orchid to a bunch of lilies.

Despite her meticulous attention to her hat, however, she was really looking past her own reflection to that of the man. She saw the light flash into his eyes. She caught the significant expression in his face. Matters were proceeding fast—she must be careful!

This man, who at times chafed her to the point of sad anger by the view he held of her motive in work, had, she knew, a strong will. Where was it urging him? Where was it drawing her? She must be careful!

"Well, how do you like my new hat?" she asked.

"There seems to be a whole lot of it, anyhow," said Palmer.

"Is that all you can say? Oh dear!" Her suppressed excitement sought relief in a burst of chatter. "And I supposed you'd be delighted; it's so old-fashioned, so distinctly feminine. But that's just like you men. Talk about women being capricious! Why, you never stay put! Which proves how wrong the woman's game has been—based on trying to please men, when they never can be consistent. I thought you'd highly approve of me to-night—'My nice new hat and gown will be such a relief to his eyes,' said I, 'after my usual rainy-daisy, hygienic, sensible set of dowdy old duds!'"

Caution evaporating, she swung about and thrust forth a dainty slipper.

"These, sir, instead of square-toe, no-heel boots!"

She placed a rose in her corsage and draped a glittering oriental scarf about her white shoulders.

"And this—and this—after my one-piece bag of corduroy, which you always sniff at—you know you do, though you're too old-fashioned in your ideas of polite-

ness to say so! And now, you don't even notice the difference. Oh dear!" she tragically sighed; "but what's the use?"

"Kitty!" cried Palmer, springing to his feet with such agility and purpose that Katherine promptly put the table between them. "Not see the difference? I've hardly been able to notice anything else. And if you will insist on teasing me, my friend, you'll have to take the consequences!"

Danger in his eyes, he began to move around the table. The rose on Kitty Shannon's bosom quivered through all its petals.

At that moment the telephone-bell rang sharply. She breathed her relief in a long exhalation. The danger was averted. Yet, as she darted to the telephone, her mind was throbbing with the thought:

"We've reached it! It will surely happen to-night!"

Palmer had stopped short, his face flushed, his eyes very brilliant. She petulantly turned to him with the desk-telephone in her hands.

"Oh, why didn't we get away? I'm sure it's a call. Some selfish person is trying to die, or get born, or something, on my night off!"

"Your own fault," said Palmer, with a touch of real sullenness, for the same fear had struck him. "I've been begging you to get away for an hour past."

"Yes, I know; but oh, if you knew my bliss at not feeling hurried! Oh, it can't be a call!"

"Then put down the phone, and let's beat it!" said Palmer.

She stared at him in amused yet vexed hesitation. She could plainly feel his anxiety.

Never before had Palmer beheld Kitty Shannon in the gala costume of her sex—of her provocative, alluring, emphasized femininity. Never before had the bewitching, temperamental woman been so irresistibly revealed beneath the busy, modern civic official—for she was employed by the board of health to inspect school-children on the East Side, and was also in the service of the systematized charities.

One moment ago, a pursuit and flight, the primitive play of man and woman, old as the first satyr and nymph, had been flushing and sweeping them onward. Then came the shrill alarm of the telephone, voicing the disenchanting restraints of civilization, and suddenly Dr. K. L. Shannon,

civic official, confronted him, where Kitty, the golden girl of his heart's desire, had fled before him. Must he lose his chance? A wave of anger swept through him.

The telephone resumed its clamor.

"Yes? Hello, what is it? I'm Dr. Shannon—who are you? The charities office? Didn't you understand I'm not on call to-night? What? Oh, is that so? When did they send word? Yes, yes, I see." She glanced over the telephone at Palmer. "Well, all right," she continued, all the animation gone out of her voice. "I suppose I must go!"

She put the telephone soberly down, and in silence went to a closet and took out a long, dark coat and her bag.

"So our evening has gone to pieces?" asked Palmer.

She looked at him gravely.

"We might save some of the bits," she said. "You might go on to the dance, and I'll show up later on."

"Where are you going first?"

"Oh, down Second Avenue way," she said, bundling things into her bag.

"Why must you go?" he persisted. "Is this a very important case? Won't somebody else do?"

"It's a neglected case—just now," she said, and picked up her bag.

"I'm going with you," he said, stepping in front of her.

"Oh, no!" she cried hastily. "I don't need an escort; do you think I could keep my job if I did?"

"Well, you're going to be escorted this time," said Palmer stubbornly. "I'll not lose all my evening."

"Oh, you selfish brute of a man!" said Katherine, but her tone did not support the accusation. "Come on, then; we shall have to hurry!"

II

SHE snapped off the lights; they dropped down with the elevator, and soon were in an east-bound car. After passing through the glare of Broadway and crossing Fifth Avenue—with its double vista of violet-hued lamps through which the motor-cars went endlessly with smooth, still speed—the car became emptied of its diners-out and theatergoers and took in the denizens of another world—the underworld, which was Katherine Shannon's working world, but for Carroll Palmer well-nigh an unknown region.

Of late he had come almost to dread it, for it seemed to exercise a fascination over Katherine. He could not consider it the fascination of a real, heartfelt devotion to work—the urge of a true vocation. He feared that Katherine might be one of those uncentered women who whirl hither and yon from their natural orbits, attracted by the chaotic forces of the fads and follies of this feverish age. It was not that he denied, theoretically, that women might be as fully equal to the high tasks of the physician as men could be; but it was another and a far different matter to admit that Kitty Shannon was such a woman.

Why must she waste her life in such a fashion? Could he not teach her to see that her work was not so all-important? For certainly she must be mistaken in believing herself called to such nerve-shattering, soul-disturbing ways of life. And she seemed growing bitter and cynical.

His meditations were interrupted.

"Come on!" said Katherine, almost brusquely. "Here's where we change cars."

He followed her swift rush to the door. She dropped from the still moving car with the expertness of a newsboy, darted forward, and boarded a down-town Second Avenue car.

She was silent and still and grave, yet she throbbed with life. Her dark eyes, rendered still darker by the shadow of her hat, were somber, yet full of a steady light. She seemed to have withdrawn herself from the exterior world and to have entered a plane of solitary self-concentration.

Palmer was sorely puzzled by her aspect. What was the matter?

Then, all at once, as by a flash of intuitive sympathy, by the subtle divination by which fellow spirits recognize and understand each other, he comprehended. It was that Katherine was immersed in the same mood that he himself knew so well at times when his personal, outward life vanished before the summons of his larger, greater, interior life of work.

She, too, was now at work. She wasn't a girl with her mind on a dance, or a pretty woman playing the game of games with a man. She was the worker, the physician, collecting her powers and faculties, concentrating all her resources of skill and knowledge and will for the piece of work before her. Even so was it with him when his plans were on the table, and his implements at hand, and the spirit of his art

spread its overbrooding wings gently above him.

"Here we are!" she said.

Again there was the swift, unhurried rush to the platform. Again there was the lithe, accustomed swing from the moving car. Concentrated as she was upon her case—which was to her as his plan to the architect, his play to the dramatist, his house to the carpenter—she hadn't neglected its practical aspect. Her eyes remained on guard while her spirit retreated to its cell. She knew just where she was all the time—as much, so Palmer was now convinced, as she knew what she was to do.

He followed her with the disconcerted emotion of a man in whose hands the weapon of a pet idea has been shattered. Dr. Shannon was no mere player at her work; she was the real thing!

She stopped before the doorway of a five-story tenement-house. It exhaled a feverish breath laden with hot, dank effluvia—like the breath of a sickly monster.

"Look about you, Carroll," said Katherine.

Overhead, an elevated train went grinding and harshly thundering. Next door to the tenement-house was a saloon with a huddle of disputatious men red-faced amid a cloud of tobacco fumes. Street-cleaners were lazily collecting garbage in reeking carts. Over the saloon was a dance-hall. Across the open windows passed clinging, reeling, whirling couples while a tin-pot piano and a tongue-tied, harelipped, stuttering fiddle mangled epileptic bursts of rag-time.

On both sides of the block were mean little shops where withered, rotting vegetables and fruits and unnamable "delicatessen" things were exposed to the dust and flies; together with several more saloons, and a pawn-shop or two. Slatternly women hung from windows, sat on door-steps, carried jugs in and out of the "family entrances," chattered with the shopmen, gossiped in groups, scolded men, or screamed after children.

And the children! They swarmed, down on the ground, beneath the haze of humid, heavy, dust-laden air shot through with lurid gaslight, around the feet of the men and women. They darted to and fro in gutters, wriggled in heaps about ash-carts and alleys, hung in clusters to cart-tails. They were like tiny, purblind creatures at the bottom of muddy waters. Their voices

shrilled and piped and croaked like the sounds from a swamp at night.

"A small portion of the million," said Katherine. "Do you think you could pick out your one?"

Palmer had nothing to say. He shook his head.

III

A SLIGHT, stooping, pallid youth slipped out of the doorway, like an etiolated fish moving in dark waters.

"That you, doctor?" he whispered hoarsely. "Gee, we t'ought you'd never come!"

"Is that you, Garger?" said Katherine. "Well, what's the matter with the baby now?"

"Ah, so it's a child, this case!" thought Palmer.

"I guess he's croakin', all right," muttered the youth.

"Nonsense!" said Katherine. "Come on." She turned to Palmer. "You might as well see it through," she said.

Palmer nodded and followed with her, behind the pallid boy, up the black, airless, evil-smelling stairs.

"He's twenty years old," Katherine whispered, her voice coming and going in whispers as they climbed flight after flight. "The wife is seventeen. The baby is nine months old, and there's another coming. Garger can't read or write, though he was born in this block, of American parents. He hasn't earned a cent for nearly half a year. He's a lunger, too; I'm sure of it, though he won't let himself be examined. The wife's mother does scrubbing and washing, and has helped them out. The baby has pernicious anemia, and is defective in a dozen ways. A part of my income is derived from trying to keep him alive. Suppose he's your one in the million?"

Palmer said not a word. Here and there a door was open, giving glimpses of interiors that seared themselves with aching, acrid vividness on his vision, to haunt him later on.

At last he broke forth with—

"Kitty, if you keep on at this your heart will break!"

"You mean my head will go, don't you? It certainly is enough to drive one crazy—it all seems so hopeless, at times."

Before Palmer could reply Garger opened a door, exposing a small room in

which a smoky oil lamp burned, and which, with all the windows closed, gave forth a reek worse than any before. Two fat women and a slight, wild-eyed slattern of a girl were watching a baby that lay sleeping amid a huddle of foul clothes—or was it already dead, Carroll Palmer wondered, as he glimpsed its waxy, incredibly wasted face?

"Oh, doctor!" gasped the girl, springing toward Kitty, and clawing her coat. "Oh, oh, he's had a fit, and now he's goin', sure! Oh, what'll we do?"

"Keep quiet, first thing," commanded Katherine. "Why are all those windows closed down?"

"We thought he might take cold," croaked one of the fat women.

"You're killing him," said Katherine. "Open the windows, please," she continued, looking at Palmer.

She threw her coat on the back of a chair. The girl-mother cried out, clasping her hands:

"Oh, doctor dear, you do look lovely!"

Katherine smiled and patted the young woman's shoulder.

"All right; now light the gas-stove and heat some water. Hurry up!"

A heavy, stolid silence fell on the two fat women, the girl-mother, and the pallid father. Katherine glanced at their faces. She whispered to the girl, who nodded with hanging head.

"I thought so," said Katherine. She turned to Palmer. "Please lend me a quarter—put it in the slot of the gas-meter there—I haven't my purse with me—result of being with a man."

The women bustled about the stove. The pallid youth retired into a corner. Katherine took the child and sat down. Nobody paid any attention to Palmer, who, very tall and broad-shouldered, in formal evening dress, felt awkwardly in the way, and out of place, and distinctly depressed and miserable.

Suddenly, as he looked at Katherine, he forgot his self-preoccupation, and his mood of dull horror vanished. Her beauty bathed him with benedictive balm. In her golden dress, with her softly golden head bent, her warm arms about the babe, and her profile outlined against the lamplight as she studied the little child and performed the ministrations of her office, Katherine seemed revealed to him in her quintessential quality. She was not Kitty,

the clever, shrewd girl; she was not Dr. Shannon; she was the woman he loved, tender Katherine, with a child upon her knee, and irradiated, to his exalted fancy, by a light from within her being, rather than by the dull flare of the smoky lamp.

Then, all at once, the child uttered a wailing gasp and his limbs made contorted movements.

The girl-mother screamed.

"Oh, oh! It's beginnin' again! Carroll's havin' another fit! Oh, doctor, stop him! Stop him!"

Palmer felt a singular and painful shock as he heard his own name shrieked. A surprise that arose from depths unmoved by the mere surface coincidence swept over him; but he had no opportunity to heed the thoughts that clamored in his mind.

"Stop that screaming!" cried Katherine. "Get me the hot water!"

As the child's convulsions increased, the mother lost all self-control. She became wildly hysterical. Screaming and writhing, she fell upon the floor.

The two fat women—one of whom, as Palmer had learned by this time, was the girl's mother—became obtusely helpless. The pallid young father, snarling like an animal in a fit of nervous irritation, vented his feelings on his wife by rushing from his corner and shaking her violently.

"Shet up, will yeh?" he yelped. "Shet up, will yeh?"

He choked back her cries so that Palmer had to pull him away by main force, and then lift the still struggling girl into a chair and hold her arms.

"Be quiet! It's all right—be quiet!" he implored.

He was unable to control her; but Katherine said with an irresistible authority:

"Stop that at once, do you hear! Come and help."

The girl instantly obeyed. Whimpering, humble, and deprecatory, she hovered about Katherine; but she was useless—she trembled too much.

"Come and help me," said Katherine, over her shoulder, to Palmer. "Bathe his legs and body with the water!"

He dropped on his knees by the tub of water, close by Katherine, and obeyed as best he could her curt directions, bathing the child, and moving its arms up and down over its head in an effort to force air into its lungs. He was conscious of his

knees shaking under him, and of an odious fear. Was the baby going to die in their arms?

At last its distress reached a term, and the child fell into a deep coma of exhaustion.

IV

KATHERINE looked up.

"Now, listen, you people," she said, in the same voice of urgent will with which she had subdued the mother's hysterics. "You'll have to do what I say—this boy must go to the hospital. Now, quit your nonsense about not wanting the hospital. It'll have a chance there, and none at all here. I see you've been giving it milk—look at those sour curds, and don't lie! And I told you positively not to give it anything but the boiled lime-water until I came."

"That was you, mother!" whimpered the girl.

"Glory be to God, will ye hear the girl? Me lie to the doctor?" said the old woman. "Don't believe her, doctor dear; she gave the little darlin' the milk herself, so she did!"

"Never mind who did it, you've nearly killed him between you," said Katherine. "Filthy, adulterated stuff from an open can in one of those shops below," she said aside to Palmer. "This baby must go to the hospital."

They nodded agreement in silence.

"All right," said Katherine, with a repressed sigh of relief. "Now, Mr. Garger," she continued, "hurry to the nearest telephone, call up Dr. Stevens at the Children's Hospital, and ask if Dr. Shannon can send a case there immediately. Well, why don't you go?"

Garger, dumb and motionless, stared at her dully.

"Oh, I see—you need a nickel. Give him one," said Katherine.

Palmer produced the coin; but still Garger did not move.

"I don't know how to telephone," he muttered in husky accents.

Palmer started as if flicked with a whip-lash, and cast a look of blank astonishment upon Garger—this child of the greatest city of the western world, born amid its tangle of electrical wires, in the midst of the nerves of its vast systems of intercommunication, who didn't know how to telephone! It was as if he had said he could

not walk upright, but must crawl on all fours, like a beast in the jungle. To Palmer, the incident revealed the depths of the underworld as nothing else had done.

"I'll do the telephoning," he said to Katherine.

The young father led the way to the saloon next door. Palmer turned to him before entering.

"Mr. Garger," he said, with assumed carelessness, "how did you happen to call your boy Carroll? Is it a family name?"

The pallid little weakling stared stupidly, and then answered:

"No, it ain't. My woman asked the doctor to name the baby—she's the goods, that doctor, and she's looked after my woman an' the kid all along. Yeh see, my woman t'ought the kid was goin' to be a world-beater, I guess, and she tells the doctor she wants the name of a top-liner for him. The doc, she says:

"Well, call him Carroll—he's the biggest man I know, and by and by I'll get him to give us a hand to give the kid a chance."

"But if the doc meant Jimmy Carroll, the alderman, she was 'way off—he's a snide fer fair!"

Palmer hurried into the saloon.

Ten minutes later he was carrying the baby to the street, where a throng of children babbled about two taxicabs. The father and mother were placed in one, and the child was laid in the mother's lap.

"Is it necessary for you to go?" asked Palmer of Katherine.

"No. I'll talk to Dr. Stevens on the phone."

Palmer leaned into the cab, and put a bank-bill into the girl's hand.

"I'll pay the driver," he said. "This is to help things along till your husband gets work." He scribbled his office address on his card. "Come to see me tomorrow, Mr. Garger—I know a place where you can get a job, I think."

Garger muttered something inaudible, but the girl leaned forward and said, with a passionate intensity that reminded him oddly of Katherine:

"Gawd bless you, mister—and, say, look after the doctor!"

"I'll try to," said Palmer lamely.

He settled matters with the chauffeur, and the car sped away.

"Has that child a chance?" he asked, turning to Katherine.

"Perhaps one in a million," she said, glancing at his somber face. "And I must phone, to give him that much."

Palmer went into the saloon with her, and she talked with Dr. Stevens, after exchanging nods with the hard-faced young bartender, who growled a few low words to the drinkers, so that their hurly-burly ceased.

"Now, let's get out of this," said Palmer, when they were in the street again. "Is it still the dance?"

"I suppose so," she replied listlessly.

"Well, here's a cab; get in."

"You ordered two? What extravagance!" said Katherine, sinking back in a corner. "I see I can't bring you down here often—you'd go bankrupt."

"Gramercy Square!" said Palmer to the driver, and they sped on.

V

NOT a word was spoken during the journey; but both felt matters urgent to be settled vibrating just beneath the surface of their silence.

They alighted near the clubhouse.

"Before we plunge into the dance," said Palmer, "let's sit in the garden, and give our lungs a change of air. I'm nearly stifled."

The curious flutter in his voice seemed to confirm the statement.

"You have a key?" she asked hesitatingly.

"Yes; I'm a Gramercy householder now, and I am privileged."

Without waiting for her consent, he opened a gate in the tall fence that surrounds the grassy, flowered, tree-filled oasis in the many-millions wilderness. A cooling, refreshing air, like a breathing from the trees, descended upon them. There were odors of mown grass; there was the perfume of flowers; there was a soft stirring, a gentle breeze, in brush and leaves.

They found a bench.

"Gramercy means 'great thanks,'" said Palmer. "The children privileged to enter here are born with more than one chance in a million, and learn something of quiet and nature."

"Behind locked gates and iron fences—at the expense of the under million!" said Katherine. "And do they really profit? Do they return anything for what they receive?"

Palmer leaned toward her. The shadow in which they sat had become denser, or else there was a mist before his eyes.

"Some of them may," he said; "but your own question agrees with what I've said—that none can tell from what quarter the men and women we need may come. It may be from the locked garden of Gramercy, or from the gutter of Second Avenue. Katherine," he continued, trembling, although the heat of the night seemed suddenly increased, "why did you give my name to that child?"

She moved away from him, and straightened her posture.

"Do you object to your name being used in the gutter?" she asked, with a harshness that did not adequately disguise some other emotion.

"No, I don't," he said, still looking at her intently.

She stared straight before her into the dusky mass of shrubs that shut off sight of the street.

"It's a queer thing," she said, "but I've hardly ever known a young mother, even in the worst place over there"—and she gestured toward the east—"who wasn't foolish enough to dream that her child might turn out great or grand or good above others. Poor little Mrs. Garger had a bad case of the illusion. So, you see"—at this point Katherine's steady voice oddly changed, faltering through an attempt at laughter—"you see, as a kind of joke—a poor one, I admit—I told her to call the kiddie Carroll. I had in mind your fantastic notion that—well, that you never can tell whose child may be the—the one in a million. Foolish of me, wasn't it? Very inconsistent, of course. But, after all, who knows? Poor little kiddie—it may do something worth while, if it has a chance."

"Katherine, let's give it a chance, if it can live. Can it? If it does, I'll stand behind it—"

"You will?" she cried, springing to her feet. "Yes, it has a chance—a good one, now!"

Her bosom was rising and falling. Palmer advanced.

"Oh, Carroll! Now let's go and dance!" she murmured.

"Katherine!" he whispered, holding out his hands.

"Oh, listen!" she breathed hurriedly. "The music—they're starting a waltz; let's hurry!"

The music came throbbing into the still and dusky garden.

"Katherine!" he repeated.

Again she tried to chatter something frivolous, but broke down.

"Katherine!" he cried. "Oh, my dear, I love you—listen, I love you! What shall I do if you don't love me?"

"Carroll!" she said, and swiftly clasped her arms about his neck. "Why, dear, I've loved you for ever so long! I love you with every atom of my being!"

And the night breathed with uplifted bosom—or was it only what is called a breeze that stirred the growing things about them in the garden, in this little oasis of nature amid the city streets?

VI

"BUT my work," Katherine said, later—very much later—"it must go on."

"Yes, indeed," he replied. "You're a worker—the real thing. My dear, I've learned a good deal to-night. We'll work, right enough, you in your way and I in mine, yet together."

The note of deep feeling in his voice, which often before had thrilled Katherine, was vibrating now as he took her in his

arms again. His faith was moving him, his vision was stirring, and even his kiss brought her no such joy as she knew in sharing his inner life, even as she felt that he had come to share hers.

"Yes, we'll work, and do our best, while we wait for the coming of that one among millions who surely will come to teach the sad world how to live!"

There was silence. The dance music had ceased. Even the surge and clamor of the city seemed to ebb to inaudibility. Then from some house near-by there issued the cry of a child.

"Carroll, did you hear that?" whispered Katherine, in a shaken voice, and suddenly clinging to him, her body quivering. "Oh, Carroll!"

A thought had come into her mind as with the rushing of wings—a thought like an unspoken annunciation.

"My dear, you're tired out," he said anxiously. "And no wonder—I must get you home!"

She smiled against his breast, wanly, tenderly, yet with gentle irony. He was wonderful, this man, but his comprehension had its limits—which was just as well, perhaps!

IF LOVE BE ONE

THE road is smooth, the wind is soft,
The sky is clear o'erhead;
But what are pleasant ways and days
To those whose hearts are dead?
And what is song that fills the ear,
Yet can no further go,
And what is light that eyes can see,
But heart can never know,
When two there be who walk life's path,
As if they walked alone?
For two are never company
If love be gone.

The skies are black, the winds are bold,
The road is rough and long;
But what are clouds and stony ways
When hearts are full of song,
And two there be who walk life's path
Unheeding wind or weather,
And minding but the merry sprite
Who binds their hearts together?
All ways are smooth, all days are bright,
With him for guide and sun;
And three are always company
If love be one!

Eden E. Greville

THE FRIENDLINESS OF PUPPINS

BY THOMAS L. MASSON

AUTHOR OF "TOGETHER," "THE CLOWN'S CODE," ETC.

WITH A DRAWING (FRONTISPIECE) BY C. D. WILLIAMS

EACH Saturday morning, at half past eleven, Mr. Puppins, cashier for the Clerger Mills, went his rounds among the clerks, paying them off from a package of envelopes that he carried in his hand.

Mr. Puppins was a pale-faced young man of a serious attitude, slightly stooping, with a suggestion of shabbiness in his clothes. A close examination of his collars revealed their ragged edges, and his shirts were of the material that unconsciously suggests the display advertisements at a fire sale. Mr. Puppins was about twenty-seven years of age, and some seven years before had been graduated from a high school with honors. He was an exemplary young man.

Brayner, busy writing at his desk, looked up with a pleasant smile as Puppins approached. Puppins never stopped to talk with any one else on his weekly round; but Brayner possessed a great fascination for him. Brayner was a Harvard man, and his "folks" were howling swells. It is true, they had lost all their money, so that Brayner was obliged to pick up the first clerkship that offered. This, however, was of no consequence to Puppins, and did not affect his admiration for Brayner's perfect manners.

Many of the other clerks had a habit of always being in trouble. Either they were fighting among themselves, or they thought there was a conspiracy against them. They played tricks upon one another, and sometimes upon Puppins, which he secretly resented, for in spite of his humble origin, he was a sensitive soul, with much latent refinement.

Brayner had a way of passing things off, of overlooking the disagreeable, of saying

the right thing in the right place, which to Puppins, was a source of constant astonishment. It was true that Brayner was often careless, and, to Puppins's methodical mind, this, in any one else, would have been a cardinal sin. In Brayner, it simply afforded Puppins the opportunity to shield his friend—for Puppins always delighted to think of Brayner as his friend, although Brayner, on his part, never thought of Puppins in that way.

Brayner tore off the envelope containing twenty dollars, and thrust the bills in his trouser-pocket, while he said to Puppins:

"You're a minute late; I was beginning to get heart disease!"

"Was I?" said Puppins, looking up at the electric clock. "I—"

Brayner put his arm half-way about Puppins.

"I was only joking," he smiled. "Really, old fellow, you ought to cultivate a sense of humor. It helps in no end of ways."

"I know it." Puppins looked around furtively at the other clerks; he had a design, long matured, now to be sprung on his friend. "Got anything to do this afternoon?" he said in a whisper.

Brayner, with the experience of one used to society, began to formulate any number of excuses, rapidly going over them in his mind to make the best selection. He wanted to say the thing which, in case he didn't care to accept Puppins's invitation, would let him out.

"I was on the point of telephoning to Sickert—he's an old friend of mine," he explained. "He usually goes up to the club on Saturday afternoon in his car, and he rather wants me to go along."

"Oh!"

Puppins's voice unmistakably betrayed his disappointment.

"Tell me what I can do for you," said Brayner. "I should be only too glad."

Puppins lowered his voice still further.

"'Twasn't anything of any consequence," he said. "Did you know I was engaged?"

"Why, no! Great Scott, old man, why didn't you tell me? This is great news! Congratulations!"

"Oh, thanks, it isn't a new thing; but I thought, if you didn't have anything better to do, I would like to take you around and introduce you. I spoke to Lucy about you, and said I might bring you around some time."

"Why, sure!" exclaimed Brayner heartily. "I shall be delighted to go. How far is it?"

"Oh, it's only over in Brooklyn. Of course, you understand that we are not well off; but I've saved up a couple of thousands, and we expect to get married in a month or so."

"Why, I should be delighted!"

Puppins was greatly set up.

"All right," he said proudly; "we'll start as soon as the office closes."

Brayner was mildly curious about Puppins and his family affairs, and mildly apprehensive that he would be bored. It was obviously his rôle, however, to control Puppins. It gave him a respectable margin for his own office shortcomings. In brief, what others gained by hard work, Brayner gained by the exercise of that immense asset, tact.

II

ARRIVED at their destination, Puppins, with the skill of long practise, put his finger next to the speaking-tube in the entry of the flaked-stone apartment. The door suddenly opening, to Brayner's amazement, they walked up two flights of narrow stairs that would have done credit to any self-respecting lighthouse.

Brayner, whose mind had been rendered critical by long contact with superior things, shuddered slightly as he entered the stuffy little room, with its hideous carpet, its still more hideous wall-paper, and the "marked down" aspect of the ornaments. Born in huge, whirring factories, these mournful inanimates, without the least semblance of soul or individuality, had moved with others in serried groups to the department-stores,

where they had at last been separated, to be finally invested with the domestic sentiments of lowly hearts.

Brayner was evidently expected.

"My friend, Mr. Brayner," said Puppins. "Miss Lucy Mulligan!"

It was the first time that Puppins had dared to call Brayner "friend," but he did it with a conscious pride.

"It's mighty good of you to ask me over here," said Brayner, gracefully concealing his slight sense of embarrassment.

"Claude has told me about you, Mr. Brayner," said Miss Mulligan, her pale blue eyes luminous with hospitality. "Won't you sit down?"

Brayner had an irresistible inclination to laugh at the invitation to sit down. It was perhaps the first time that a girl had ever asked him to do such an obvious thing; but he was no snob. Indeed, he was full of genuine and kindly human feeling, and it was not long before he had made himself thoroughly at home.

Lucy, though pale and thin, was rather a handsome girl. Her best frock—obviously her best—was slightly too much fussed up, but in spite of its shortcomings from a Parisian point of view, it became her very well.

After a while, Puppins began to grow uneasy.

"Where's Maud?" he said at last.

"I'll go and get her," said Lucy, who had, in reality, only been waiting for the signal.

Brayner looked at him inquiringly. It was just beginning to dawn on that imperturbable youth that a visit for which, up to that moment, he had puzzled himself in vain to discover a reason, had in reality a perfectly definite object.

"Lucy's sister," said Puppins, as his *fiancée* disappeared. "She's an awful nice girl," he added by way of emphasis. "I tell you," he went on confidentially, "I've known those girls for a long time, and they're all right. You probably think Lucy's a good-looker; well, you wait till you see Maud! She can lay 'way over Lucy for looks. She's a graduate of the high school—stood 'way up. She can cook, too; helps her mother."

Brayner was beginning to feel nervous. The plot of his well-intentioned friend suddenly, but yet dimly, began to dawn upon him. At this moment Lucy reentered, followed by her sister.

"I'm delighted to meet you," said Brayner, squeezing her hand with precisely the fractional pound pressure that he had learned to apply. He looked frankly into her healthily red cheeks and into her brown eyes. "I was beginning to be afraid that you were not going to give us the pleasure of seeing you."

"She was reading," said Lucy, who took almost as much pride in her handsome sister as Puppins did.

"What was the book?" said Brayner.

"Oh, it wouldn't do for me to tell!" said Maud, with a blush.

"Go on!" said Lucy. "She's very fond of poetry," she explained to Brayner. "It was Tennyson, wasn't it?"

"She's up on the whole shooting-match," said Puppins, with a heavy attempt at banter. "Aren't you, Maud?"

"I can't say that I like Tennyson," said Brayner, hoping to help along the conversation by starting an argument. "I wouldn't say anything against him," he added suavely, wondering to himself if his own little joke would be divined.

He could not help recalling Dolly Grainger, whom he had rather hoped to meet that afternoon at the country club. He grinned inwardly as he thought how Dolly would have enjoyed that little remark!

Maud bristled up.

"You're not guying me, are you?" she said. "It sounds that way."

Brayner repented.

"Please don't think that! I was only joking. Have you ever read Mrs. Browning's sonnets to the Portuguese?" he asked. "I am awfully fond of those things. Really wonderful!"

They all sat down.

"What's the matter with taking a walk in the park?" asked Puppins.

"Just the thing!"

At the end of an hour they were all well acquainted, Brayner's genuine nature inspiring the confidence of the two girls. After a while they changed, Puppins walking with Maud—an opportunity that he had evidently craved.

"Pretty good fellow, eh?" he whispered, as they fell behind the others.

"He's a swell, all right!" replied Maud, a little petulantly. "What did you bring him over here for, anyway? He isn't any better than we are!"

"He doesn't pretend to be, and you know it!" said Puppins hotly. "He's a college

man and all that, but his folks lost all their money. They haven't got a thing left, and he has to look after his mother. He's trying hard in the office, and I hope he will make good. You see, it's kind of hard for him, because he hasn't been used to being up against it. He didn't start in as an errand-boy, the way I did; but he never complains, and I believe if he had the right girl, it would be—well, it would give him an object in life. I have taken a great interest in that boy."

Puppins spoke familiarly, as if he was pleased with a sense of responsibility about Brayner.

"How would it do to ask him to supper?" he said bluntly. "I want you two to get better acquainted."

Maud was by no means so ill-pleased over the idea; she had indeed been secretly flattered by Brayner's pleasant manners.

"I wouldn't mind," she said, "if Lucy—"

"Oh, I'll fix Lucy!"

As a matter of fact, Lucy had already been fixed. Unknown to her sister, that match-making person had devoted a considerable portion of the afternoon—after a certain telephone-message—to the culinary department.

III

BRAYNER, realizing that he was in for it, cordially acquiesced in the invitation. Returning to the apartment, the two sisters excused themselves, and left the two men alone.

Puppins, his honest soul quivering with satisfaction over the promising result of his intrigue, grasped at the opportunity to lay a solid foundation.

"Fine girl, isn't she?" he said.

"Splendid!" exclaimed Brayner. "Old fellow, I envy you your luck; your fortune is made with a girl like that!"

"I mean Maud."

"Yes, indeed; she's a fine girl, too," replied Brayner, knowing how to convey the subtle impression that he didn't think she was quite so fine as Lucy. "When do you expect to step off?"

"In a couple of months. You see," went on Puppins, settling back in his chair, "I have been planning this thing for some time. I've got a couple of thousands in the bank, and I think we'll buy a little place in the suburbs. In fact, I have my eye on just such a place. With my salary, we can

manage very well." Puppins was getting thirty dollars a week. "No reason why you shouldn't do the same thing," he added tentatively.

"I've got a mother to support!" laughed Brayner.

"So have I—she's going to live with us. Would you mind my giving you a piece of advice?"

"I should be delighted."

"You see, you've been more or less handicapped. No one knows it better than I do. It's been mighty hard for you at the office, but I have admired the way you have tried. You've never had to work the way I have. Now, if you could look forward to getting married—not quite now, you understand, but some time in the future—I believe it would be a great help to you. I began saving money the moment I was engaged. You see, you've got something to work for, then."

"I'll think it over," said Brayner.

IV

BRAYNER and his mother had been reduced to living in a boarding-house—that last extremity of suspended financial animation. The next morning Brayner, rising at ten—as was his habit on Sunday—was burst in upon by his friend Sickert.

"Car's outside! Come on, finish your grub, and be off; we'll make a day of it!" said the visitor, almost carrying Brayner out through the door.

Sickert was always in a hurry. It kept him busy trying to spend forty thousand a year.

At two o'clock that afternoon, on a piazza of the Hilsted Country Club, Brayner ran face to face with Dolly Grainger.

"Why, Jack!" He looked into the eyes of the one girl he loved. "Why haven't you been around?" she expostulated. "Don't you know that what has happened could never make any difference to me? And my letter—why did you answer it in such a snippy way?"

"Nonsense, my dear!" Brayner was fairly drinking in her smart little figure, with its perfect detail. He thought of Maud Mulligan. "I'm working," he said, with a smile. "I have no time for frivolities."

"Jack!"

There was not a soul in sight. She sank down in a heap on a settee covered with inviting cushions.

"Come on over here and let's have it out. Do you know how you've made me suffer?"

"You look it! You must have gained five pounds."

"What do you intend to do—keep on ignoring your friends, just because you happen to have met with reverses? It's horrid of you; it's not manly!"

"Dolly, will you marry me?"

"Yes!" she replied promptly.

"When?"

"Oh, some time!"

"Where should we live?"

"In a house, you silly!"

Her eyes were almost beginning to fill with tears.

"Whose house?" Brayner asked.

"Now, Jack, what's the matter with you? Are you getting morbid? It's really dreadful. I never would have believed it of you."

"You haven't answered my question."

"I don't care to answer such a foolish question."

"Then I will. If I were to marry you, my dear, on top of my misfortunes, I should have to live in your house; I should have to accept your money. Think of my coming around on Saturday night for my regular allowance! Think of my putting my tailor's bills surreptitiously on your dressing-table! You know, my dear girl, the trouble with me is not that I am too proud. I'd marry you in a minute, with all of your money, on my present magnificent salary of twenty dollars a week, if I could get used to it. But I couldn't! You see, I have always had money of my own, and it wouldn't be possible for me to adjust myself to taking it from my wife."

"It's positively wicked of you to talk that way!"

"Dolly, it's the simple truth. Since I have had to work for my living, I have come to understand it. You cannot just now, because you live in another world. We did not make the conditions, but we must abide by them. It would be difficult if there were only us two to consider; but with my mother to support, the whole situation is impossible. We must wait!"

"For what?"

"Until I can support you as you are used to living."

"How absurd!"

"It seems so to you, but that is only because you have never been face to face with things as I have."

Sickert was coming around the corner. Brayner, seeing him about to turn back, called to him:

"Come on, old man! We're all ready."

Then he turned quietly to Dolly.

"As soon as I have a salary of five thousand dollars a year," he said grimly, "I'll marry you!"

And he added to himself:

"That will be in about a thousand years—at the present rate!"

V

It was the following Saturday, at eleven thirty. For days Brayner had reflected upon the friendliness of Puppins, seeking some way in which to evade the inevitable invitation that he knew would be forthcoming. He had made up his mind to tell Puppins the truth. He would explain frankly that he was in love with another girl. Of course, that would settle the matter; and it would be the only explanation which would set him right with Lucy and her sister.

Brayner braced up for the occasion.

"Look here, old chap," he said, as Puppins bore down upon him, envelopes in hand, "I have something on my mind to tell you. I've been putting it off, but it must be done. You've been no end of a friend

to me, old man. When you asked me over to see your *fiancée* last week, and for the reason that you suggested, it was something that I never can forget. For the first time in my life I have realized what it means to have a friend. Puppins, old chap, it was worth losing all my money to find that out! But the fact is—"

"I know what you are going to tell me," said Puppins. "Of course, I was sorry when I heard it, but it's all right. Maud is a splendid girl; she would do credit to any man; but I understand all about it. You are in love with another girl."

Brayner gazed at him in astonishment. "How in the world did you know that?" he gasped.

Puppins leaned over so that the other clerks could not hear.

"I'm the cashier," he said, "and I have to know everything. During the past week this business has changed hands. It's been bought out by Miss Grainger. She paid half a million for it. Between you and me, she paid too much; but I guess she knows her business."

Then he handed Brayner his weekly pay-envelope.

Brayner tore it open. It contained a hundred-dollar bill.

THE TEST

THERE are no two men who act alike;

They may try and try, but the way of each
Is as different as the varying bloom
Of every different peach.

Man or tree, it's a matter of soil,
Of sun and rain, stock, branch, and flower,
Whether the fruit shall fall to rot
Or ripen to helpful power.

Should unconcern graft the best of sprigs
On a limb that runs not pure of sap,
Blossoms will fail or droop and die,
Though cuddled in June's own lap.

Even when buds have burgeoned fair—
Pledge of a rich, uncantered crop—
If slackly pruned, surrendered to scale,
Their yield will waste and drop.

False is the refuge of seeming health;
At the first keen glance or the first sharp tooth,
Fruitage of tree and deed of man
Are marked as lie or truth!

Richard Butler Glaenger

THE MAKING OF A MUSICAL COMEDY

HOW A "BIG BROADWAY SHOW" IS WRITTEN, SET TO MUSIC,
AND STAGED

BY WILLIAM ALLEN JOHNSTON

ILLUSTRATED BY W. B. KING

MOST people wonder how they are made, these musical shows that help most to put the "way" in Broadway, these marvelous creations of tinkling music, tripping feet, modish burlesque, and lavish costumes, upon which the producers gamble a million dollars or so each year, and for which the public pays many millions more. Most people wonder, and very few know—among the latter few being included a good many critics who ought to know more definitely.

To go back a generation, it is related of Sir Arthur Sullivan that an admiring friend one day said to him:

"I hear you are writing a new operetta."

Sir Arthur lifted his shoulders.

"No," said he. "I am rewriting it."

If the term "rewritten" properly applies to "Pinafore," "The Mikado," and the other famous Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, with their consistent construction, their well-sustained themes, their unity and naturalness throughout, what shall be said of these potpourris of the day called musical comedies? How are they made?

The question was put bluntly to the author of a recent Broadway hit and of several previous successes. He fumbled mentally for a reply.

"Oh, well," he finally concluded, "they're not made. They just happen!"

His fellow worker, the composer, was consulted. The latter hummed a line of his latest song hit and smiled happily, be-

cause the show was playing to the tidy sum of fourteen thousand dollars a week. Then his brow clouded, and he retailed the anecdote of Sir Arthur Sullivan.

The stage-manager, the third important factor in the process of manufacture, was, strange to say, on friendly terms with both author and composer. This might be explained by the fact that he has a sense of humor. The real explanation, however, as the author and the composer pointed out, is the fact that he really reads and studies a book before he stages it.

"How are shows put on?" he repeated. Then he grinned at his friends, who responded with forced smiles. "With an ax!" he said briefly.

PLEASING THE PUBLIC

We were standing at the back of the theater in which the aforesaid hit had been playing for about five weeks. The house was packed; it was heavily vibrant with that hum of anticipatory muttering the volume of which is a joy, but its note always a worry, to the producers' ears.

The crowd that faced the curtain was not at all the London kind of audience, largely local, regular in attendance, well-trained, complacent; not the kind of audience you would find in any other metropolis in the world. It was a gathering of people from many cities, largely a "seeing-New York," high-jinks crowd, possibly a little too well-wined and dined, not so highly critical as

highly expectant, surprisingly easy as well as difficult to please, having many different tastes, but insistently demanding something new, something surprising, something red-hot in flavor. In short, it was a typical Broadway audience—an audience which is a constant enigma to the keenest observer.

"Look at 'em," said the author savagely. "Their attitude tells it all. See them sitting there, lolling back easily with an expression that says: 'Come on now. What you got? Show us!' Frankly," he added, "no one can tell in advance just what will get across and what will fail. The best you can do is to try it out."

The curtain had rolled up, and the opening chorus was in full swing.

"Only the music counts here," explained the composer, "and that not a great deal. The audience is looking, not listening. The words don't count at all. In one show that I recall the opening song consisted entirely of the repetition of a single line—'Light is the night.'"

"Really, the music here is important—or should be important," he went on. "It tells of the show, the kind of show that is to follow. But what's the use? The audience doesn't know that—and it's looking at the chorus-girls, anyway."

The stage-manager smiled.

A star appeared, bowing and tripping her way to the footlights through a gorgeous setting. As her song progressed, the composer wrung his hands distractedly.

"Oh, awful! Awful!" he moaned. "Listen to that note!"

"No enunciation at all," chimed in the author. "Can't hear a line back here. Why write lyrics?" he asked hopelessly. "And I sat up all night over that one!"

"First I wrote that song for a soprano," the composer explained. "Then they wanted it changed for a contralto. She is neither. She can't sing at all, but she's got style, personality. She can act. She's—oh, well, that's the whole explanation—she's a star!"

Again the stage-manager smiled.

"Sh-h!" said all three. "Here he comes!"

Amid a fanfare of music and the customary ejaculations of the chorus, he entered—the star comedian, the head-liner, the individual for whom the whole comedy was originated, written, and produced.

"Watch his legs," whispered the stage-manager admiringly. "See how he uses

'em, how expressive they are, how he keeps 'em going all the time. Watch 'em! That's the secret," he went on. "That's the basis of the whole thing, star, principals, chorus, and all. You've got to keep their legs moving. Never let 'em stop. High or low, dance or march, keep 'em moving. That's action!"

"Eh? What's that?" interrupted the author. He put the question to the stage in general, leaning forward with a hand over one ear. "No, no, that's not right!" he protested in a hoarse whisper. "Oh, Lord! There he goes. Off his lines again! He's messing it. Now he's on again. No, he's off again! Oh, say, he's faking—improvising the whole scene!"

"Those were good lines," said the composer sympathetically.

"Yes, *were*," repeated the author. "They're gone now. In the book that scene took half a minute. He's stretched it out to ten minutes. But it goes. Hear 'em applaud! He's a star! Well, that means tinkering again, cutting out a song, I suppose—"

"Wait! I've an idea!" exclaimed the composer. "Give them a song right there. Take that line of the ingénue's—'I'm only a poor little girl.' Get it? Ta dada da dee dee dee—dum dum." He warbled blithely on.

"Dee dee dum?" asked the author solemnly.

"No, no! Dee dee dum."

They hummed together for some moments, and then hurried to the office to get some note-paper.

The stage-manager smiled pityingly.

"Couple of bugs!" he explained briefly. "If anything goes into that scene, it will be a new dance number. Too many songs now!" He indicated the stage with a gesture. "Take those two tall girls off the left and move up those two from the right. Wait a minute. They are all contraltos. Well, that makes no odds. Make two of 'em sing soprano, that's all. They're showy and can dance. So-long! I'm off," and he disappeared back of the scenes.

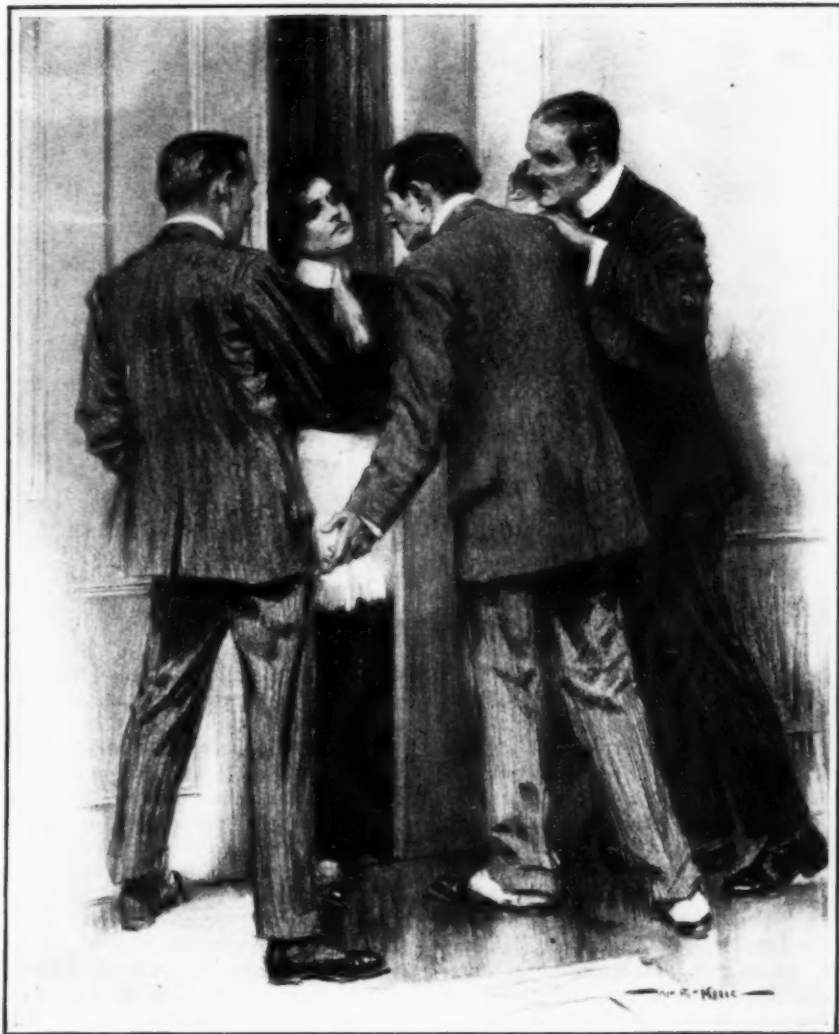
WRITING THE BOOK

But to go back to the beginning.

The beginning of a musical comedy is the book. There must be a book—some kind of a book; although, when rehearsals are ended, those concerned in the production of the show often wonder if there

really was a book, and, if so, why. A talk with a producer would give an impression that the book was the most important thing in the business; but an afternoon at a rehearsal would lead one to believe that the

It is generally believed, probably, that librettos are written and offered by inspired authors, just like novels and short stories. Many in fact are, but very few of these ever see the light of production. The pro-



"DINING-ROOM'S CLOSED. COFFEE AND ROLLS!"

book is regarded very much as some vivisectionists are said to look upon a dog.

The book, or libretto, consists of the lines and lyrics of the show—that is, of the original ones. It is preceded in the making by a scenario which outlines the plot, if there is any, and gives the characters, or most of them.

6

ducer's mail brings him quite a number each week, and all, it is claimed, are read carefully and hopefully. Perhaps one in one hundred of these submitted books has a chance of acceptance. Their common faults consist in lack of technique, of humor, of color, of snap, of catchiness.

The books produced to-day are nearly



"IT WAS NOT LIKE THIS WHEN I WAS YOUNG"

always ordered by the producer. They may be written afresh, or transplanted from Europe and rewritten; or they may be musical adaptations of farces and the like. But they are indicated and ordered, and almost always to fit a star. There are comparatively few successful librettists and composers to-day, and they are kept about as busy with orders as they care to be.

There are various kinds of stars, big and little, old and new, stars about to twinkle, and luminaries of failing power. A producer, let us say, has an operatic star—meaning that he has her under contract. She can act. He decides that she will succeed upon the musical-comedy stage, and communicates with a well-known librettist.

Author meets star, studies her on the stage and at play, decides that in addition to her splendid voice she is of a whimsical, almost hoydenish temperament. So he makes a part for her, one calculated to emphasize her voice and bring out her peculiar abilities as an actress. She is at first a little street urchin, a newsgirl, and

develops in the climax into a great operatic success. The entire production is plotted and written around her.

Another producer has a well-established star, one of the few who draw a salary of one thousand dollars a week besides a share of the box-office receipts. It is very necessary to get a good medium for such a head-liner, so the producer goes abroad with a weather eye open. In Paris he finds something promising, and he snaps up the musical and dramatic rights. It is a one-act play, and too suggestive for American standards; but he does not want the play—merely the part to which his star is particularly adapted. He brings back an idea, and author, composer, stage-manager, scenic artist, and costumer construct the operatic tailorings of a "big hit."

Many European successes are brought over to the United States, but never in their original form. Radical changes, to suit American tastes and American stars, are made in the lines and lyrics; and generally the music is considerably changed. The

task is not easy; in fact, the average author or composer prefers to originate rather than reconstruct.

Our writers say that it is difficult to fit English lyrics to foreign music. It took seven months to rewrite the music of "The Merry Widow," a Viennese success, whereas the scores of many American productions are completed within a week.

MAKING THE MUSIC

When the book is finished, it is turned over to the composer, whose task is much more exacting than might be imagined. It is not merely a matter of writing catchy tunes for the lyrics and dances. The music must be a play in itself. It must express the setting, the theme, the action, and all the scenes. It must be varied, and so possess sustained interest. It must observe stage technique. It must have a climax.

In a few instances the composer works alone. He may be something of a lyricist as well as a musician. Just so there are lyricists who have an apt appreciation of music. The double talent is of great advantage in each instance.

But nearly always author and composer work together. The two lines of creative effort are closely allied. Melody and words should express the same thing: In a successful play they do, just as in a song hit. Where the two war against each other, a ragged failure is the natural result.

Most composers have melodies in store, creative efforts of some happy moment which have never been used on the stage. Often the author will find among them the appropriate tune for a new song; or he may devise a lyric to fit one. Again, the whole score may originate spontaneously from the book.

Let us view the composer at work. He is, bear in mind, a being who tinkles mentally, who hears and expresses in music.

"There's a theme," he begins by way of explanation, "in every sound"—he indicates the sweep of the city from his studio window—"in the passing of an Elevated train, the dumping of a load of coal, the mingled roar of street traffic. What a splendid symphony might be written of the day's life of the great city—the broken awakening of activity, the sharp staccato of the morning's vigorous work, the rest at noon, the steady swell of the afternoon's consummation, the evening's lull, and then

the brilliant crescendo of the night life! But that is beyond the point.

"There's a theme, too, in the spoken word or phrase or sentence. Take—well, take any matter-of-fact thing—the address of this building. You say it."

He wheels about to his piano, and directly the keys tinkle back the words. Then the variations are developed—with increasing elaboration, but centering about the theme and expressing it clearly and frequently—till shortly a distinct melody is evolved, well-rounded and pleasing.

"There you are—a musical creation out of a street address! So you see how lyrics are set to music. A catchy phrase gives the theme, and the rest is a matter of harmonics. But you must have catchy words. They make catchy tunes. Let me relate an experience. When 'The Yankee Tourist' was put on, three of us, author, lyric-writer, and myself, hurried out to Columbus, Ohio, to watch the opening performance. It went off very well. It was a success, we felt; but we were unanimous on one point—we had failed to score a big song hit. Most of the songs got over the footlights, but there was no particular one that sent the audience home whistling. We sat up late that night and struggled with the problem. We went over the entire libretto, studied, suggested, wrote, and appealed to the piano; but nothing quite hit our fancy. We arose late next morning and found ourselves shut out of the dining-room. The haughty waitress answered our knock and snapped:

"'Dining-room's closed. Coffee and rolls!'"

"Author and lyricist fumed and spoke of chops and steaks. Susie answered their threats with a stony glare. Then I tried a new tack. Never argue with a head waitress if you can play any other card! I gave her a melting look.

"'Now, Susie,' I suggested, 'these are married men and grouches, but'—with another melting look—'how about a little ham and eggs?'"

"It worked. Susie melted back and dimpled.

"'Aw, come on in!' said she.

"'How about a little—' 'how about a little—' I liked the phrase, and kept humming it over. It seemed to appeal to me as well as to Susie. Then, when the breakfast appeared, the lyricist pushed the mustard-pot toward me with:

"How would you like a little mustard?"
 "I've got it!" I cried. "I've got it!"
 "Yes, you have it," said he. "But why fuss about it?"

"A song!" I cried. "A hit! Write me some verses beginning 'How would you like a little sweetheart all your own?'"

"Well, he scribbled them on the back of a menu-card, and that was the song hit of 'The Yankee Tourist.'"

"Again with 'The Yankee Consul.' It opened in Boston, and I was stopping for the time with some friends there. They had told their little son that I could make a piano talk, and this so appealed to his child's imagination that he waited up late for me to come home.

"Please, sir, make the piano talk," he said to me.

"I sat down and played as I talked to him. 'Don't you think it's time to go to bed? Such a little golden head! It was not like this when I was young? It was not like this at all—'

"He clapped his hands.

"Is that in your show?" he asked.

"No," I said, "but it goes in tomorrow!"

"And that became the popular song—'It Was Not Like This in the Olden Days.'"

The importance of a song hit is very great. However excellent the whole score and the lines, a catchy lyric may often make the success of a show. Measured in box-office receipts, it may have a value reaching into the hundred thousands. Notable instances are "Every Little Movement" in "Mme. Sherry," "Cuddle Up a Little Closer" in "The Three Twins," and many others.

Frequently the criticism is made by the public that the score of one show will, in parts, closely resemble that of another, and the inference is drawn that the music has been plagiarized. This charge is unfair. It is true that shows are often similar. There has been a tendency with producers to copy successful productions. The authors are frequently overwhelmed with orders to do more and likewise. Witness the succession of copies after "El Capitan," and the cake-walk era of a few years ago.

The point is that the shows are similar in setting, action, and characters; and since the music is, or should be, expressive of the words, it is bound to evidence similarity. This, however, is unintentional

upon the part of the composer, and probably it is unconscious.

STAGING THE SHOW

The real work of author and composer begins after the libretto and the music have been written. For one thing, there is the period of rehearsals dominated by that lord high executioner, the stage-manager, and in a lesser degree by many other factors. For another, there is the try-out, first in a "dog" town and then on Broadway, before that constant enigma, the public.

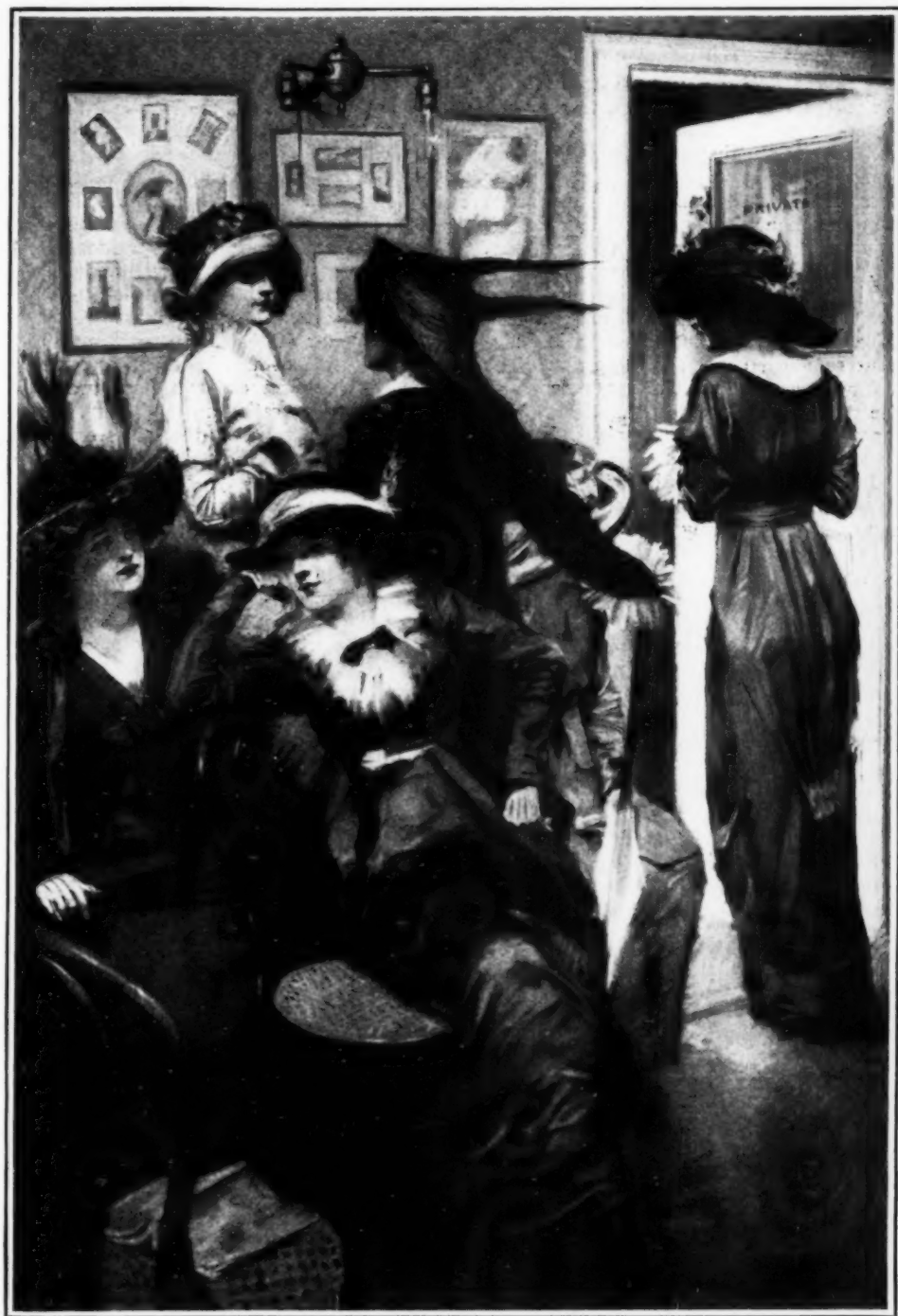
There are stage-managers and stage-managers. All know their work in every detail; and generally speaking, while they may spell art with a small "a," they do know the business—spelled with a large "b"—of pleasing the public. But it is also their business to interpret the book, and—here the division comes in—there are some who conserve the book in their process of presentation and others who tear it to tatters.

The author contends, and rightly, that dramatic unity should not be destroyed. It is harder to achieve unity in the construction of a musical play than in the straight drama, because you are also building with the unknown quantity, music. The finished structure is therefore more delicate, more easily injured, exceedingly difficult to repair.

It is the stage-manager's best art to illuminate, to bring out the latent ideas of the play. To this end certain changes and interpolations are very necessary. Very well, but let these be made gently and deliberately, always with a sincere knowledge of the book, and with a sense of preserving its sequence of action—at least to the point of holding the interest and understanding of the audience.

Many fatalities occur at rehearsals; many failures are directly traceable to mistakes made during this period. Most people can readily recall some production that breaks vitally in one or more places, or that jars all the way through. This, as the author vividly explains, is where the arteries of the book have been too ruthlessly cut. The play bleeds to death. The audience loses its interest. The critics, in delight, sharpen their pencils and lay the blame with the author and the composer, who may be wholly guiltless.

We are in too much of a hurry with the



HIS OFFICE DOOR ADMITS AND DISCHARGES AN INTERMITTENT LINE OF APPLICANTS

making of musical comedies, in America, just as we are with many other things. We take fewer weeks than they take months in Europe. Frequently the author has only a week or ten days in which to complete his entire work. Scores are written in a few days, or perhaps within twenty-four hours. Rehearsals are done in a month or less. It took a year and a half to produce the European version of "The Dollar Princess." In this country we start, say, in August and open in September.

The casting is very important. Bad casting has made a failure of many a good book. This is not due to errors in judgment so much as to poor material. The ability to act and sing is rarely found in one person, while the organization of a chorus, pretty, musical, vivacious, is often an almost hopeless task.

In each producer's suite of offices there is an executive known as the engagement man; he is necessarily of a patient, hopeful temperament. For several hours a day he views and reviews as his office door admits and discharges an intermittent line of applicants. There are girls tall and short, stout and slim—and with characters and abilities about as varied.

The girl who is young and pretty and who can sing and act, or shows promise of singing and acting, is a find. The girl who will really work is rarer still. For her there is an excellent future, if she is willing to leave New York, is not blinded by the footlights, and will sacrifice the lure of a wealthy marriage to genuine stage ambitions.

GOWNS AND SCENIC EFFECTS

Costuming and scenic effects are leading factors in the success of every musical production to-day; in the big *mélange* of burlesque and extravaganza they mean practically everything.

Time was, not long ago, when the chorus was distinguished by pink tights and gilded spears. To-day the show-girl wears a number of gowns and ballet dresses, the least cost of which is about seventy-five dollars each. Gowns for the minor parts and principals range in price from one hundred to five hundred dollars.

Only a few years back Blanche Ring attracted much attention with a costume reported to have cost fifteen hundred dollars. That is nothing to-day. Nora Bayes's wardrobe in the all-star Weber &

Fields cast of a year ago cost nearly eight thousand dollars. Fabulous amounts were mentioned in connection with the costumes that Gaby Deslys brought over last season from the Rue de la Paix.

These very expensive novelties are generally obtained from the fashionable modiste; but, on the other hand, the theatrical costuming business has developed to such a point that one or two of the leading firms claim to have customers among fashionable women in private life. They have elaborate sales-rooms, where the model gowns are exhibited in handsome glass cases, the general interior of the shop suggesting the taste and style of the importer on Fifth Avenue. One firm employs from two to three hundred operatives in its factory.

The book is brought to the costumer and carefully studied. A designer of much ability—and high salary—makes and submits colored sketches. For the musical show with a cast of average size the order will run from five to fifteen thousand dollars. The bill for the costumes in the Weber & Fields show of last year, exclusive of several personal wardrobes, amounted to twenty-five thousand.

In the still more elaborate productions an even greater value in gowns may be seen in a single ensemble. Those in the finale of the second act of "The Dollar Princess" are said to have represented the huge cost of fifty-two thousand dollars, while the jewel ballet at the Hippodrome in 1910, in which seven hundred people were on the big stage at one time, cost fifty-six thousand.

Moreover, with the wear and tear of stage activity, these costumes do not last long, despite the best attention of the wardrobe mistress. The average time is about twenty-five weeks. At the Hippodrome one of the busiest and largest departments underneath the big theater is the wardrobe repair-shop. Duplicates of most of the dresses are kept on hand for emergency use.

Scenic effects, too, are expensive. The swing in "The Earl and the Girl" cost about five thousand dollars. In "The Midnight Sons" the dance on the tables, done away with after a few trials, involved an outlay of sixty-five hundred dollars.

Apparently the limit in lavish expenditure has been reached. "The Runaway Girl," which may be called the first extravagant show, was advertised to have cost

seventy-five hundred dollars. A few years later "Little Nemo" was produced at a stated expense of eighty-six thousand. Its first cost and running expenses were such that in spite of excellent houses the play showed little or no profit.

The following cost figures are about correct for some well-known productions:

"The Merry Widow," \$35,000.

"The Midnight Sons," \$40,000.

"Havana," \$30,000.

"The Waltz Dream," \$40,000.

"Little Boy Blue," \$30,000.

It is difficult to stage any musical comedy to-day for less than eighteen or twenty thousand dollars, and the cost of maintenance is heavy. Take the salary list alone. Prima donnas—not stars—receive from \$100 to \$350 a week; principal comedians, \$150 to \$500; the tenor and the bass, \$75 to \$300; minor characters, \$40 to \$100; show-girls, \$25 to \$35; the chorus, \$15 apiece in New York and \$20 to \$25 on the road.

The big stars may receive five hundred dollars a week and "half the show." Sam Bernard, Lillian Russell, and Fritzi Scheff have had contracts of one thousand dollars a week or more, with one-quarter of the receipts. The royalties to author and composer run from five to seven per cent.

In order to succeed, a play must take in each week a minimum of about five thousand dollars. Takings of twelve or fourteen thousand—the receipts of a hit—make big money for the producer.

In view of the fact that only about half of the musical plays put on succeed, and considering how very expensive the failures are, the element of chance in the business is obvious. The producer's side is an out-and-out gamble, and a big one.

There is always the lure of a big success which will more than balance the books. "The Merry Widow" reached the million-dollar mark in receipts within ten months at the New Amsterdam Theater. So they plunge—much too blindly and recklessly it would seem, even after allowing

for the impossibility of any certainty in gaging the public taste. If any one thing is clearly indicated in the future of musical comedies, from the standpoint of business, it is their more careful, thoughtful, deliberate production.

"We can't get good books," say the producers. "That's the trouble. Too many theaters in New York? Nonsense! With good books we could fill them all."

"That is unfair," contends the author. "Lavish production, extravaganza, burlesque have been brought so high that the art of book-making has been laid low. Then there is the star system. We have become mere operative tailors fitting garments to the stars. Go back to Gilbert and Sullivan. They are universally known to-day because *they* were the stars—they, the author and the composer. Their operettas have lived because they were written for the sake of operative art, and played by stock companies whose purpose it was to exploit the play, not themselves. And Smith and DeKoven—their 'Robin Hood' has lived. After that came the deluge—or, to be metaphorically correct, the meteoric shower—of stars."

But the star system is declining. Several producers are working hard to eliminate it. They have never been keen about its maintenance, except as competition spurred them on.

Stars are difficult to handle. In the transition from a human being to a potentiality of the bill-boards and footlights, some strange metamorphosis occurs that is most baffling. Nor are stars tangible assets. Not all of them pay, in either the short or the long run.

And better books and music are being written to-day. Several productions of very high order have been seen within the last few years; but quite generally there is a better tone, an evidence of greater sincerity in work. The public taste is more critical. The high kicking, broad, burlesque successes of a decade ago would not thrive to-day.

But all this is for the critics to discuss.

NATURE'S PAGEANT

THE pageantries of all the kings of old—
Augustus's triumphs, Henry's Cloth of Gold—
Sooth, what are these before
The pageant of the autumn at our door?

Sennett Stephens

AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY BRANDER MATTHEWS

PROFESSOR OF DRAMATIC LITERATURE IN COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY

The Remarkable Success of
Many Americans in Writing the
Stories of Their Own Lives—
Four Recent Additions to the List
of Significant Autobiographies



THE proper study of mankind is man; and nowhere can man be more properly studied than in the record of his own sayings and doings, his own feelings and thinkings—if this word may be hazarded—prepared by himself; that is to say, in his autobiography.

In one of the picture-galleries of Florence there is an immense collection of portraits of painters, every one of which is the handiwork of its subject, and every one of which, therefore, reproduces the visage of the artist as he desired it to be represented. Probably most of these portraits are flattered by unconscious self-love; and probably many of them are also defective through unconscious self-deception.

The shelves devoted to autobiography in any library are like this gallery in Florence. They contain descriptions of authors by the authors themselves. No doubt men of letters, when they set out to portray themselves, are as avid of approval and as desirous of making a good impression on the public as are the artists who have contributed to the Tuscan collection. But truth will out; no matter how stoutly an artist or an author may strive to put his best foot forward, the other foot will per-

sist in thrusting itself into view; and if perchance it discloses itself as cloven, there can be no hope of concealment for it.

Benvenuto Cellini, with bold frankness, was forever belauding his many virtues, but he could not hide from the readers of his autobiography his many vices. Rousseau, with morbid self-esteem, asked the readers of his confessions to accept his vices as virtues; but he has been able to trick only the foolish into the acceptance of his sorry apology for his more contemptible characteristics.

Probably it is this quality of inveterate veracity, despite any effort of the narrators to befog the truth, which bestows their major charm upon these self-revelations. The readers are playing a game with the writer and always winning it, since they are certain to find him out, however adroitly he may think he has hidden himself. They read his sentences to see what he has to say for himself; and they read between the lines to discover what he is unwilling to say about himself.

And the amused satisfaction of the readers is less than the delight that the author has in talking about himself. To talk about ourselves is one of the most ob-

EDITOR'S NOTE—Previous articles in this series of talks upon current literary topics, by Brander Matthews have been as follows: "Who's Who in Fiction" (March), "Books on the Drama" (April), "Modern Essays" (May), "A String of Short Stories" (June), "Concerning Cook-Books" (July), and "American Character in American Fiction" (August).

vious of pleasures; it is common to all mankind, although a few austerer spirits achieve the ascetic gratification of conquering, or at least of suppressing, this primal instinct. That is the reason why no books are composed with so much gusto, so much joy in the work, as autobiographies. Here is one of the justifications for Longfellow's witty declaration that "autobiography is what biography ought to be."

FAMOUS AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

In the scant century or so since the American branch of English literature began to differentiate itself from the British main stem, it has borne no fruit more satisfying to the taste than its cluster of autobiographies. Franklin's own account of what is perhaps the most interesting life yet lived by any man born in America has been termed the corner-stone of our literature; and it can withstand comparison with the most pungent self-portrayals of Europe, even with Rousseau's and Cellini's. Grant's "Personal Memoirs" easily holds its own alongside the noblest of the narratives of their own careers prepared by any of the great commanders, even with Julius Cæsar's, surpassingly superb as is the Roman soldier's compact account of his military exploits. And the "Autobiography of Joseph Jefferson" is not unworthy to hold its place by the side of the invaluable "Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber."

With these accounts of their own experiences due to the pens of native Americans are to be placed the corresponding books in which certain of our naturalized citizens have described themselves, declared the motives which led them across the western ocean, and told of the welcome they received on our shores. "The Making of an American," by Mr. Jacob Riis, and "The Promised Land," by the lady who calls herself Mary Antin, are noteworthy examples of this interesting and significant group of American autobiographies, demanding consideration from all of us who seek to disentangle the variously colored strands of which the huge rope of American citizenship is intertwined.

Within the past year four striking additions have been made to the lengthening list of American autobiographies, two of them by natives and two of them by men of alien birth who have cast in their lot with us and become American citizens. These

four books are "A Small Boy and Others," by Mr. Henry James; "La Follette's Autobiography, a Personal Narrative of Political Experiences"; Mr. James O. Fagan's "Autobiography of an Individualist," and Mr. John Muir's "The Story of My Boyhood and My Youth." And no four volumes could very well be more unlike, although two of them, Mr. James's and Mr. Muir's, are similar in that they scarcely go beyond the early youth of the narrators.

The four authors are very different in themselves, in their origins, and in their outlook on life. Mr. James is a man of the Eastern coast, of New York and New England, with early European affiliations and growing European tendencies. Mr. La Follette is a man of the middle West; and his abiding attitude is that of the politician of his own section who once asked:

"What have we to do with Europe?"

Mr. Fagan and Mr. Muir were both born in Scotland; and they therefore belong to that sturdy stock which has contributed so potently to the making of the American people—more potently, perhaps, than any other stock excepting only that of the Puritans and the Pilgrims. And while Mr. Fagan has settled himself here on the Eastern coast of the United States, Mr. Muir was taken in boyhood to the Wisconsin that Mr. La Follette now represents in the Senate, going on later to the shores of the Pacific.

As "the style is the man," as Buffon is supposed to have declared, the four authors are not more dissimilar in themselves than their several methods of writing. Some one who not long ago met Mr. James for the first time declared that "he talked as if he were correcting proof"; and Mr. James now composes in accord with the hesitant delicacy of his own speech. Mr. La Follette's manner is that of a public speaker, iterating and reiterating, driving his points in and then giving them an extra tap or two to make sure that they have penetrated. Mr. Fagan's style is clear, nervous, tingling with vitality; and he himself ascribes his mastery of words to the training in Latin and Greek absorbed during his Scottish boyhood. Mr. Muir also had a Scottish training in the classics, although briefer and less thorough than Mr. Fagan's; and he writes with less precision, it may be, but with a sweeping amplitude, recalling the wide prairies of

his boyhood and the mighty Alaskan glaciers of his manhood.

"A SMALL BOY AND OTHERS"

Mr. James's portrait of a boy is primarily the result of his desire to put on record the circumstances which influenced the early development of his brother, the late William James. Despite this avowed intention, the figure of "W. J." appears in these pages only intermittently, and the center of the stage is held by the narrator himself. This is, of course, what might have been predicted; as every man is the hero of his own dreams, so must every man be the hero of his own autobiography. The boy is father to the man, and this account of Mr. James's youth is an explanation of his maturity. It helps us to find answers to two of the criticisms which have been leveled at him.

The late Thomas Wentworth Higginson, surprised by the detachment with which Mr. James could discuss society in his native land, once declared that Mr. James was not a true cosmopolitan, "because a true cosmopolitan is at home—even in his own country." These pages prove that at least once upon a time Mr. James was at home in his own country, and even in his own city, however widely he was to wander in later years, acquiring slowly the faculty of perceiving his native land almost with alien eyes.

The late Robert Louis Stevenson, citing Mr. James's confession that he had been a child but had never been on a quest for buried treasure, insisted that this was a wilful paradox, because if Mr. James "has never been on a quest for buried treasure, it can be demonstrated that he has never been a child." Here in the pages of the story of his boyhood is the counter demonstration to Stevenson's own paradox. Even Stevenson himself was not more gifted in recapturing the beliefs and the sensibilities and the inexplicable sensations of childhood than Mr. James has here revealed himself. Evidently there are more types of childhood than were dreamed of in Stevenson's philosophy.

A RECORD OF IMPRESSIONS

In dealing with Mr. James's novels, Mr. W. C. Brownell, one of the acutest of American critics, remarked that Mr. James's "characteristic attitude is that of scrutiny," and that "his inspiration is

curiosity." And later the same critic expressed his opinion that Mr. James's works of fiction "are not moral theses, but psychological themes, studies not of forces, but of manifestations." This autobiography is a study of manifestations, from the attitude of scrutiny and with the inspiration of curiosity. Mr. James describes the boy he then was as peering wonderingly and contentedly through the high iron fence of the Golet residence on the corner of Broadway and Nineteenth Street—not Eighteenth, as he misrecalls it—and gazing at the peacock and the cow which inhabited the restricted area within, a strange spectacle in the heart of a great city.

There was the very pattern and measure of all he was to demand; just to be somewhere—almost anywhere would do—and somehow receive an impression or an accession, feel a relation or a vibration.

This is what differentiates Mr. James's volume of personal reminiscences from the immense majority of autobiographies; it is not so much a narrative of events as a record of accessions and impressions, of vibrations and relations. He admits that he is appearing to empty "the rag-bag of memory" into these pages; but his figure of speech is unjust to his faculty of reviving his visual sensations. It is not a rag-bag of memory from which he is picking scraps of many colors; rather is it some mysterious kinetoscope which can unveil before his mature eyes the moving pictures photographed in his immaturity and stored away undeveloped till now.

Most of these moving pictures, with the characteristic actions of all the projected figures, and with ample abundance of detail, have to do with the author himself, with his brother or his father, with one or another of the many outlying relatives who kept on turning up unexpectedly. But now and again personages of importance in the outer world came within the focus of the small boy's camera; and we have the portly bulk of General Scott, the slight figure of Washington Irving, the benignant personalities of Emerson and of Thackeray. These visions were snap-shotted here in New York. When the small boy was a little older, he was taken away from New York and put to school in Switzerland, and finally at Boulogne, where he had for a schoolfellow the son of a local baker—a boy who was to escape from Boulogne to

Paris and to become the incomparably brilliant comedian, Coquelin.

Throughout the whole of Mr. James's book there blows a breeze of humor and of good humor; and as the author foreshortens himself in the perspective of the past, he never takes himself too seriously. But when we pass from Mr. James's lively pages to the severe chapters of Senator La Follette's explanation of himself, we come to a volume totally devoid of humor and we make acquaintance with a man who cannot help taking himself seriously.

A POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The volume, and its writer also, seem to be lacking in "specific levity," to recall an apt phrase of Higginson's. Here we have unrolled before us the career of a man whose life has been given up to politics. We are invited to behold the painter's portrait of himself; and we have before us on the easel a forceful figure, an aggressive personality, a man indefatigable in shouldering his way to power, resolved to dominate, almost to domineer.

The book is significant, and it is interesting, because the writer is energetic in his effort to make us see what he stands for and what he has accomplished. Although he may not be aware of the fact, his volume is a novelty in American political literature, in that it is a campaign autobiography. With the campaign biography we have long been familiar; nearly sixty years ago Hawthorne prepared a sketch of Franklin Pierce when that friend of his college days had been nominated for the Presidency; Mr. Howells wrote pre-election lives of Lincoln and of Hayes; and Lew Wallace did a like service for Harrison. Mr. La Follette has now made a new departure in relying on his own pen and in preparing his own campaign biography, perhaps in the belief that a task so important could not safely be entrusted to a friend.

I have called this a novelty in American political literature, but it is not without precedent in the political literature of Europe. At least, I can recall one other instance where a candidate for the chief magistracy of a republic wrote his own life as a campaign document.

It was nearly two thousand years ago that Julius Cæsar was running for the dictatorship of Rome; and his opponents were attacking his public and his private life—

for the roorback and the campaign lie are not modern inventions. Many of the charges brought against Cæsar were true; some of them were false; but, true or false, he disdained to answer any of them—excepting one only, the most dangerous of all. He was accused of having neglected his soldiers while he was engaged in conquering Gaul. If this accusation should be generally believed, it might be fatal to his chance of the dictatorship. He knew the assertion that he had wasted his legions to be a campaign lie, and he "nailed it to the counter," not by any denial, but by the publication of his own narrative of the facts as they had actually occurred. Thus it is that Cæsar's "Gallic War," distasteful to modern schoolboys, is the earliest of campaign autobiographies.

The first two-thirds of Mr. La Follette's bulky tome contains his campaign autobiography; and the final third is devoted to the events which happened in the campaign itself. In these later chapters the interest falls off, for the book ceases to be autobiography and becomes controversy. With political controversy as such I have nothing to do in these papers—except to express my opinion that Mr. La Follette injures whatever case he may have by overstatement and by imputing motives.

A RAILROAD PHILOSOPHER

Oddly enough, Mr. Fagan, in his "Autobiography of an Individualist," has been guilty of the same lapse from the high standard of true autobiography. In his book also the final chapters are not strictly autobiographic; they are mainly controversial, and therefore out of place in a volume purporting to be devoted to reminiscences. And this is to be deplored, because Mr. Fagan's book is a good book, in so far as it is a narrative. It is very well written, for one thing, for its author has learned to think, and he has learned how to say effectively what he thinks. It has the style of a man who has taught himself to feel the exact value of words.

We have here the honest record of a man's finding himself—something that every man has to do sooner or later, if he is ever to attain the full stature of a man. As Mr. Fagan himself puts it, a man has been one of two things:

Either his associations, and the man's impulse coming down from the inscrutable past,

have been carrying him along and directing his movement this way or that, or, on the other hand, his will in great and small, consciously and persistently, has been hewing a personal trail through a forest of difficulties.

Mr. Fagan's will was indomitable; so far as we can discern from his own story, this vigor of volition is his chief characteristic. He knows what he wants and he has sought it single-heartedly. And although he was born a Scot and although he has become an American, what he wants is not money.

"Never in my life," he tells us, "have I had any scheme for the accumulation of money."

What he desires is freedom to live his life in his own way. He is obviously a man of character and intelligence; he has a trade—that of telegraph-operator; and he has been content with the modest wages he has earned as train-despatcher. This is in accord with Thoreau's doctrine; and it is because the doctrine has been so clearly set forth in "Walden" that "Walden" has been called the only book of American authorship which repays annual rereading.

As it happens, Mr. Fagan does not mention Thoreau in these pages, but his practise has agreed with Thoreau's precept. He has insisted on owning himself and in not being a slave to his own money or to any lust for more money. He calls himself an individual, because he holds fast to the necessity we are every one of us under of finding each his own salvation in this world. He is like the blacksmith in Scott's novel; he fights for his own hand. The narrative of his own adventures is appealing; and it is wholesome, in that it is continually warning us against the danger of relaxing endeavor and of relying on others.

The British as a race are individualists—or they were so until within the past few years. The French are governed rather by the social instinct, and are therefore less forthputting and venturesome than the British. We Americans, certainly not less independent than the English, from whom we have inherited most of our ideals, seem somehow to have a larger share of the social instinct than the British, even if we have a smaller share than the French.

We are tolerant and easy-going and sympathetic; and we do not find it hard to work with others and to combine for

common effort. Nowhere else are there so many societies for every conceivable purpose. Is there any danger that in acquiring a stronger sense of solidarity with our fellow man, we may dull the keen edge of self-reliant individuality?

THE YOUTH OF A NATURALIST

Like Mr. Fagan, Mr. John Muir was born in Scotland; and he has in his veins the same implacable energy and the same love of wandering. Mr. Fagan left Scotland as a boy for South America, and went over for a season to South Africa, before arriving in North America a full-grown man. Mr. Muir was brought from Scotland as a boy and grew to manhood on a Wisconsin farm. His account of the methods of Scottish schoolmasters is the same as Mr. Fagan's; if either of these young Scots failed in anything, at any time, they were whipped—"for the grand, simple, all-sufficing Scotch discovery had been made that there was a close connection between the skin and the memory, and that irritating the skin excited the memory to any required degree."

But where his fellow Scot is interested in human nature more particularly, and in the relation of man to society, Mr. John Muir is interested rather in nature, in animals of all sorts, in storms, and in sunsets. He sees life poetically—although he had also the Scot's practicality, which led him to invent half a dozen ingenious mechanical devices while he was still a student. His pages have a poetic glow, although they are never contaminated with any "fine writing," falsely so called. In this narrative of youthful work and play—what little play was permitted to him—we perceive in the making the poet-naturalist who was to lead thousands to our Western mountains and forests and glaciers.

Here again, as earlier in Mr. James's book, we cannot fail to see that the boy is father to the man. As the psychologic novelist was latent in Mr. James when he was the small boy he has set before us, so the poet-naturalist was latent in Mr. John Muir in the lad who led all the hired men in the eighteen-hours-a-day labor on his stern Scottish father's Wisconsin farm.

These four American autobiographies set forth careers and characters very unlike, except in this, that they are all interesting and all significant, each in its own fashion.

THE LIGHT OF WESTERN STARS*

BY ZANE GREY

AUTHOR OF "RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE," ETC.

XIX (continued)

FROM the mass of dusty-veiled humanity in the car came a chorus of low exclamations and plaintive feminine wails.

Madeline stepped to the front of the porch. Then the deep voices of men and softer voices of women united in one glad outburst, as much a thanksgiving as a greeting:

"Majesty!"

Helen Hammond was three years younger than Madeline, and a slender, pretty girl. She did not resemble her sister, except in whiteness and fineness of skin, being more of a brown-eyed, brown-haired type. Having recovered her breath soon after Madeline took her to her room, she began to talk.

"Majesty, old girl, I'm here, but you can bet I would never have come here if I had known about that ride from the railroad! You never wrote that you had a car. I thought this was out West—stage-coach, and all that sort of thing. Such a tremendous car! And the road! And that terrible little man with the leather trousers! What kind of a chauffeur is he?"

"He's a cowboy. He was crippled by falling under his horse, so I had him instructed to run the car. He can drive, don't you think?"

"Drive? Good gracious! He scared us to death, except Castleton. Nothing could scare that cold-blooded little Englishman. I am dizzy yet. Do you know, Majesty, I was delighted when I saw the car. Then your cowboy driver met us at the platform. What a queer-looking individual! He had a big pistol strapped to those leather

trousers. That made me nervous. When he piled us all in with our grips, he put me in the seat beside him, whether I liked it or not. I was fool enough to tell him I loved to travel fast. What do you think he said? Well, he eyed me in a rather cool and speculative way, and said with a smile: 'Miss, I reckon anything you love an' want bad will be coming to you out here!' I didn't know whether it was delightful candor or impudence. Then he said to all of us: 'Shore you'd better wrap up in the veils an' dusters. It's a long, slow, hot, dusty ride to the ranch, an' Miss Hammond's order was to drive safe.' He got our baggage-checks and gave them to a man with a huge wagon and a four-horse team. Then he cranked the car, jumped in, wrapped his arms round the wheel, and sank down low in his seat. There was a crack, a jerk, a kind of flash around us—and that dirty little town was somewhere on the map behind. For about five minutes I had a lovely time. Then the wind began to tear me to pieces. I was fascinated, then terrified. We went so fast I couldn't catch my breath."

"Helen, I thought you were fond of speeding," said Madeline with a laugh.

"I was; but I assure you I never before was in a fast car, I never saw a road, I never met a driver!"

"Perhaps I may have a few surprises for you out here in the wild and woolly West."

Helen's dark eyes showed a sister's memory of possibilities.

"You've started well," she said. "I am simply stunned. I expected to find you old and dowdy. Majesty, you're the hand-

* This story began in the May number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE

somest thing I ever laid eyes on! You're so splendid and strong, and your skin is like white gold. What's happened to you? What's changed you? This beautiful room, those glorious roses out there, the cool, dark sweetness of this wonderful house! I know you, Majesty, and though you never wrote it, I believe you have made a home out here. That's the most stunning surprise of all. Come, confess! I know I've always been selfish, and not much of a sister; but if you are happy out here I am glad. You were not happy at home. Tell me about yourself and about Alfred; then I'll give you all the messages and news from the East."

XX

It gave Madeline no small pleasure to hear from one and all of her guests varied encomiums upon her beautiful home, and a real and warm interest in what promised to be a delightful and memorable visit.

Of them all Castleton was the only one who failed to show surprise. He greeted her precisely as he had when he had last seen her in London. Madeline, rather to her astonishment, found meeting him again pleasurable. She discovered that she liked this imperturbable Englishman. Her capacity for liking any one had enlarged. Quite unexpectedly her old girlish love for her younger sister sprang into life; and with it interest in these half-forgotten friends and a warm regard for Edith Wayne, a chum of college days.

Helen's party was smaller than Madeline had expected it to be. Helen had been careful to select a company of good friends, all of whom were well known to Madeline. Edith Wayne was a patrician brunette, a serious, soft-voiced woman; sweet and kindly, despite a rather bitter experience that had left her worldly wise. Mrs. Carrollton Beck, a plain, lively person, had chaperoned the party. The fourth and last of the feminine contingent was Miss Dorothy Coombs—Dot, as they called her—a young woman of attractive blond prettiness.

Castleton was of small stature, with a pink and white complexion and a small golden mustache. He was immaculate and fastidious. Robert Weede was a rather large, florid young man, remarkable only for his good nature. Counting Boyd Harvey, a handsome, pale-faced fellow, with the careless smile of the man for whom

life had been easy and pleasant, the party was complete.

Dinner was a happy hour, especially for the Mexican women who served it, and who could not fail to note its success. The mingling of low voices and laughter, the old gay, superficial talk, the graciousness of a class which lived for the pleasure of things and to make time pass pleasantly for others—all this took Madeline far back into the past. She did not care to return to it, but she saw that it was well she had not wholly cut herself off from her people and friends.

When the party adjourned to the porch the heat had markedly decreased and the red sun was sinking over the red desert. An absence of spoken praise, a gradually deepening silence attested to the impression that the noble sunset made on the visitors. Just as the last curve of red rim vanished beyond the dim Sierra Madres, and the golden lightning began to flare brighter, Helen Hammond broke the silence with an exclamation.

"It wants only life! Ah, there's a horse climbing the hill! See, he's up; he has a rider."

Before she looked Madeline knew the identity of the man riding up the mesa; but she did not know until that moment how the habit of watching for him at this hour had grown upon her. He rode along the rim of the mesa and out to the point where, against the golden background, horse and rider stood silhouetted in bold relief.

"What's he doing there? Who is he?" inquired the curious Helen.

"That is Stewart, my right-hand man," replied Madeline. "Every day when he is at the ranch he rides up there at sunset. I think he likes the ride and the scene, but he goes to take a look at the cattle in the valley."

"Is he a cowboy?" asked Helen.

"Indeed yes," replied Madeline with a little laugh. "You will think so when Stillwell gets hold of you and begins to talk."

Madeline found it necessary to explain who Stillwell was and what he thought of Stewart; and while she was about it, of her own accord she added a few details of Stewart's fame.

"*El Capitan*—how interesting!" mused Helen. "What does he look like?"

"He is superb."

Florence handed the field-glass to Helen and bade her look.

"Oh, thank you," said Helen, as she complied. "There, I see him. Indeed he is superb. What a magnificent horse! How still he stands! Why, he seems carved in stone."

"Let me look," said Dorothy Coombs eagerly.

Helen gave her the glass.

"You can look, Dot, but that's all. He's mine—I saw him first."

Whereupon Madeline's feminine guests held a spirited contest over the field-glass; and three of them made bantering boasts not to consider Helen's self-asserted rights.

Madeline laughed with the others while she watched the dark figure of Stewart and his black outline against the sky. There came over her a thought not by any means new or strange—she wondered what was in Stewart's mind as he stood there in the solitude and faced the desert and the darkening west. Some day she meant to ask him. Presently he turned the horse and rode down into the shadow that was creeping up the mesa.

"Majesty, have you planned any fun, any excitement for us?" asked Helen. She was restless, nervous, and did not seem to be able to sit still a moment.

"You will think so when I get through with you," replied Madeline.

"What, for instance?" inquired Helen and Dot and Mrs. Beck in unison, while Edith Wayne smiled her interest.

"Well, I am not counting rides and climbs and golf, but these are necessary to train you for trips over into Arizona. I want to show you the desert and the Arapapai Cañon. We have to go on horseback and pack our outfit. If any of you are alive after those trips, and want more, we shall go up into the mountains. I should like very much to know what you each want particularly."

"I'll tell you," replied Helen promptly. "Dot will be the same out here as she was in the East. She wants to look bashfully down at her hand—her hand imprisoned in another—and listen to a man talk poetry about her eyes. If cowboys don't make love that way, Dot's visit will be a failure. Now Elsie Beck's one desire is to be revenged upon us for dragging her out here. She wants some dreadful thing to happen to us. I don't know what's in Edith's head, but it isn't fun. Bobby wants to be

near Elsie, and no more. Boyd wants what he has always wanted—the only thing he ever wanted that he didn't get. Castleton has a horrible, bloodthirsty desire to kill something."

"I declare now I want to ride and camp out, too," protested Castleton.

"As for myself," went on Helen, "I want—oh, if I only knew what it is that I want! Well, I know I want to be outdoors, to get into the open, to feel sun and wind, to burn some color into my white face. I want some flesh and blood and life. Beyond all that I don't know very well. I'll try to keep Dot from attaching all the cowboys to her train."

"What a diversity of wants!" said Madeline.

"Above all, Majesty, we want something to happen," concluded Helen with passionate finality.

"My dear sister, you may have your wish fulfilled," replied Madeline soberly. "Edith, Helen has made me curious about your especial yearning."

"Majesty, it is only that I wanted to be with you for a while," replied this old friend.

In the wistful reply, accompanied by a dark and eloquent glance, there was something which told Madeline of Edith's understanding, of her sympathy, and which was perhaps a betrayal of her own unquiet soul. It saddened Madeline. How many women might there not be who had the longing to break down the bars of their cage, but had not the spirit!

XXI

In the whirl of the succeeding days it was a mooted question whether Madeline's guests or her cowboys or herself got the keenest enjoyment out of the flying time. Considering the sameness of the cowboys' ordinary life, she was inclined to think they made the most of the opportunity.

Stillwell and Stewart, however, found the situation trying. The work of the ranch had to go on, and some of it was sadly neglected. Stillwell could not resist the ladies, any more than he could resist the fun in the extraordinary goings-on of the cowboys. Stewart alone kept the business of cattle-raising from a serious setback. Early and late he was in the saddle, driving the lazy Mexicans whom he had hired to relieve the cowboys.

One morning in June Madeline was sit-

ting on the porch with her merry friends when Stillwell appeared on the corral path. He had not come to consult Madeline for several days—an omission so unusual as to be remarked.

"Here comes Bill—in trouble!" laughed Florence.

Indeed, he bore some faint resemblance to a thunder-cloud as he approached the porch; but the greetings he got from Madeline's party, especially from Helen and Dorothy, chased away the blackness from his face and brought the wonderful, wrinkling smile.

"Miss Majesty, sure I'm a sad, demoralized old cattleman," he said presently. "I'm in need of a heap of help."

"What's wrong now?" asked Madeline with her encouraging smile.

"Wal, it's so amazin' strange what cowboys will do. I'm jest about to give up. My cowboys are all on strike for vacations. What do you think of that? We've changed the shifts, shortened hours, let one an' another off duty, hired greasers, an', in fact, done everythin' that could be thought of; but this vacation idee growed worse. When Stewart set his foot down, then the boys begin to get sick. Never in my born days as a cattleman have I heerd of so many diseases. There's Booley. I've knowed a hoss to fall all over him, an' wunst he rolled down a cañon. Never bothered him at all! He's got a blister on his heel, a ridin' blister, an' he says it's goin' to blood-poisonin' if he doesn't rest. There's Jim Bell. He's developed what he says is spinal meningitis, or some such like. There's Frankie Slade. He swore he had scarlet fever—because his face was burnt so red, I guess. When I hollered that scarlet fever was contagious, an' he must be put away somewhere, he up an' says he guessed it wasn't that; but he was sure awful sick an' needed to loaf around an' be amused. Why, even Nels doesn't want to work these days. If it wasn't for Stewart, who's had greasers with the cattle, I don't know what I'd do!"

"Why all this sudden illness and idleness?" asked Madeline.

"Wal, you see, the truth is every blamed cowboy on the range except Stewart thinks it's his bounden duty to entertain the ladies."

"I think that is just fine," exclaimed Dorothy Coombs, and she joined in the general laugh.

"Stillwell, you needn't be so distressed with what is only gallantry in the boys, even if it does make temporary confusion in the work," said Madeline.

"Miss Majesty, all I said is not the half, nor the quarter, nor nothin' of what's troublin' me," he answered sadly.

"Very well—unburden yourself."

"Wal, the cowboys, exceptin' Gene, have gone plumb batty, jest plain crazy, over this heah game of gol-lof."

A merry peal of mirth greeted Stillwell's solemn assertion.

"Oh, Stillwell, you're joking," replied Madeline.

"I hope to die if I'm not in daid earnest," declared the cattleman. "It's an amazin' strange fact. Ask Flo. She'll tell you. She knows cowboys, an' how, if they ever start on somethin', they ride it as they ride a hoss."

Florence, being appealed to, and evidently feeling all eyes upon her, modestly replied that Stillwell had scarcely misstated the situation.

"Cowboys play like they work or fight," she added. "They give their whole souls to it. They are great big simple boys."

"Indeed they are," said Madeline. "Oh, I'm glad if they like golf! They have so little play."

"Wal, somethin's got to be did if we're to go on raisin' cattle at Her Majesty's Rancho" replied Stillwell. "You recollect what pride the boys took in fixin' up that gol-lof course out on the mesa, and how they all wanted to see you an' your brother play, an' be caddies for you? Wal, whenever you'd quit they'd go to work tryin' to play the game. Monty Price, he was the leadin' spirit; an' he an' Link Stevens—both cripples, you might sav—joined forces an' elected to beat all comers. They did beat 'em, too, an' that's the trouble. Long an' patient the other cowboys tried to best them two game-legs, an' hev'n't done it. Mebbe if Monty an' Link was perfectly sound in their legs, like the other cowboys, there wouldn't hev been such a holler; but no sound cowboys 'll ever stand for a disgrace like that. Monty an' Link hev got the books an' directions of the game, an' they won't let the other boys see them. They show the rules, but that's all; an' of course every game ends in a row almost before it's started. The boys are all turrible in earnest about this gol-lof; an' I want to say, for the good of ranchin', not to men-

tion a possible fight, that Monty an' Link hev got to be beat. There'll be no peace round this ranch till that's done!"

"What in the world can I do?" Madeline asked.

"Wal, I reckon I couldn't say. All I'm sure of is that the conceit has got to be taken out of Monty an' Link. Wunst, just wunst will square it, an' then we can re-soome our work."

"Stillwell, listen," said Madeline. "We'll arrange a match game, a foursome, between Monty and Link and your best picked team. Castleton, who is an expert golfer, will umpire. My friends will take turns as caddies for your team. Caddies may coach, and perhaps expert advice is all that is necessary for your side to defeat Monty's."

"A grand idee!" declared Stillwell with instant decision. "When can we have this match game?"

"Why, to-day—this afternoon. We'll all ride out to the links."

"Wal, I reckon I'll be some indebted to you, Miss Majesty, an' all your guests," replied Stillwell warmly. He rose with sombrero in hand and with a twinkle in his eye. "An' now I'll be goin' to fix up for the game of cowboy gol-lof. *Adios!*"

The June days had set in warm—hot, in fact, during the noon hours; and Madeline's visitors had profited by the experience of those used to the Southwest. They indulged in the restful *siesta* during the heated term of the day.

Madeline was awakened by Majesty's well-known whistle and pounding on the gravel. Then she heard the other horses. When she went out she found her party assembled in gala golf attire and with spirits to match their costumes. Castleton, especially, appeared resplendent in a golf coat that beggared description. Madeline had faint misgivings when she reflected on what Monty and Nels and Nick might do under the influence of that blazing garment.

"Oh, Majesty," cried Helen, as Madeline went up to her horse, "don't make him kneel. Try that flying mount. We all want to see it. It's stunning!"

"But that way, too, I must have him kneel," said Madeline, "or I can't reach the stirrup. He's so tremendously high."

Madeline had to yield to the laughing insistence of her friends and, after all of them except Florence were up, she made Majesty go down on one knee. Then she

stood on his left side, facing back, and took a good, firm grip on the bridle and pommel and his mane. After she had slipped the toe of her boot firmly into the stirrup she called to Majesty. He jumped and swung her up into the saddle.

"Now, just to see how it ought to be done, watch Florence," said Madeline.

The Western girl was at her best in a riding-habit and with her horse. It was beautiful to see the ease and grace with which she accomplished the cowboy's flying mount. Then she led the party down the slope and across the flat to climb the mesa.

Madeline never saw a group of her cowboys without looking them over, almost unconsciously, for her foreman; but this afternoon, as usual, Gene Stewart was not present. She could not help feeling disappointed and irritated. He had not been attentive to her guests, and he, of all her cowboys, was the one of whom they wanted most to see something. Helen, particularly, had asked to have him attend the golf match; but Stewart was with the cattle. Then Madeline thought of his proven faithfulness, and was ashamed of her momentary lapse into that old imperious habit of desiring things irrespective of reason.

Stewart, however, immediately slipped out of her mind as she surveyed the group of cowboys on the links. By actual count there were sixteen, not including Stillwell. The same number of splendid horses, all shiny and clean, grazed on the rim in care of Mexican lads. The cowboys were on dress parade, looking very different, in Madeline's eyes, at least, from the way cowboys usually appeared. But they were real and natural to her guests; and they were so picturesque that they might have been stage cowboys instead of real ones. Sombreros with silver buckles and horsehair bands were in evidence. Bright silk scarfs, embroidered vests, fringed and ornamented chaps, huge swinging guns, and clinking silver spurs lent a festive appearance.

"Wal, you-all raced over, I seen," said Stillwell, taking Madeline's bridle. "Get down, get down. We're sure amazin' glad an' proud. An', Miss Majesty, I'm offerin' to beg pawdin' for the way the boys are packin' guns. Mebbe it ain't polite, but it's Stewart's orders."

"Stewart's orders!" echoed Madeline.

"I reckon he won't take no chances on the boys bein' surprised sudden by raiders; an' there's raiders operatin' in from the

Guadaloupes. That's all. Nothin' to worry over. I was just explainin'."

Madeline, with several of her party, expressed relief, but Helen showed excitement and then disappointment.

"Oh, I want something to happen!" she cried.

Sixteen pairs of keen cowboy eyes fastened intently upon her pretty, petulant face; and Madeline divined, if Helen did not, that the desired consummation was not far off.

"So do I," said Dot Coombs. "It would be perfectly lovely to have a real adventure!"

"Wal, I reckon you ladies sure won't have to go home unhappy," Stillwell said. "Why, as boss of this heah outfit I'd feel myself disgraced forever if you didn't have your wish. Just wait. An' now, ladies, the matter on hand may not be amusin' or excitin' to you, but to this heah cowboy outfit it's powerful important, an' all the help you can give us will sure be thankfully received. Take a look across the links. Do you-all see them two apologies for human bein's prancin' like a couple of hobbled bronks? Wal, you're gazin' at Monty Price an' Link Stevens, who have of a sudden got too swell to associate with their old bunkies. They're practisin' for the toornament. They don't want my boys to see how they handle them crooked clubs."

"Have you picked your team?" inquired Madeline.

Stillwell mopped his red face with an immense bandanna and showed something of confusion and perplexity.

"I've sixteen boys, an' they all want to play," he replied. "Pickin' the team ain't goin' to be an easy job. Mebbe it won't be healthy, either. There's Nels an' Nick. They just stated cheerful like that if they didn't play we won't have any game at all. Nick never tried before, an' Nels, all he wants is to get a crack at Monty with one of them crooked clubs."

"I suggest you let all your boys drive from the tee, and choose the two who drive the farthest," said Madeline.

Stillwell's perplexed face lighted up.

"Wal, that's a plumb good idee! The boys 'll stand for that." He promptly broke up the admiring circle of cowboys round the ladies. "Grab a rope—I mean a club, all you cow-punchers. March over hyar an' take a swipe at this little white bean!"

The cowboys obeyed with alacrity. There was some difficulty over the choice of clubs and who should try first. The latter question had to be adjusted by lot. However, after Frankie Slade made several ineffectual attempts to hit the ball from the teeing-ground, at last to send it only a few yards, the other players were not so eager to follow.

Stillwell had to push Booly forward; the cowboy executed a most miserable shot and retired to the laughing comments of his comrades. The efforts of several succeeding candidates attested to the extreme difficulty of making a good drive.

"Wal, Nick, it's your turn now," said Stillwell.

"Bill, I ain't so particular about playin'," replied Nick.

"Why? You was roarin' about it a little while ago. Afraid to show how bad you'll play?"

"Nope, jest plain consideration for my feller cow-punchers," answered Nick with spirit. "I'm appreciatin' how bad they play, an' I'm not mean enough to show them up."

"Wal, you've got to show me," said Stillwell. "I know you never seen a gol-lof stick in your life. What's more, I'll bet you can't hit that little ball square—not in a dozen cracks at it."

"Bill, I'm also too much of a gent to take your money; but you know I'm from Missouri. Gimme a club."

Nick's angry confidence seemed to evaporate as one after another he took up and handled the clubs. It was plain that he had never before wielded one; but also it was plain that he was not the kind of a man to give in. Finally he selected a driver, looked doubtfully at the small knob, and then stepped into position on the teeing-ground.

Nick Steele stood six feet four inches in height. He had the rider's wiry slenderness, yet he was broad of shoulder. His arms were long. Manifestly he was an exceedingly powerful man. He swung the driver aloft and whirled it down with tremendous swing. *Crack!* The white ball disappeared, and from where it had been rose a tiny cloud of dust.

Madeline's quick sight caught the ball as it lined somewhat to the right. It was shooting low and level with the speed of a bullet. At a hundred yards or so it began to rise. At two hundred it seemed to be

sailing into the sky. It went up and up in swift, beautiful flight, then lost its speed and began to sail, to curve, to drop, and it fell out of sight beyond the rim of the mesa.

Madeline had never seen a drive that excelled this one. It was magnificent, beyond belief, except for the evidence of her own eyes.

The yelling of the cowboys probably brought Nick Steele out of the astonishment with which he beheld his lucky shot. Suddenly alive to the situation, and resting nonchalantly upon his club, he surveyed Stillwell and the boys. After their first surprised outburst they were dumb.

"You-all seen thet?" Nick grandly waved his hand. "Thought I was joshin', didn't you? Why, I used to go to St. Louis an' Kansas City to play this here game. There was some talk of the golf-clubs takin' me down East to play the champions; but I never cared fer the game. Too easy fer me! Them fellers back in Missouri were a lot of cheap dubs anyhow, always kickin' because whenever I hit a ball hard I *always* lost it. Now you-all can go ahead an' play Monty an' Link. I could beat them both, playin' with one hand, if I wanted to; but I ain't interested. I jest hit thet ball off the mesa to show you. I sure wouldn't be seen playin' on your team!"

With that Nick sauntered away toward the horses. Then Nels strode into the lime-light. He picked up the club Nick had used and called for a new ball. Stillwell carefully built up a little mound of sand, and, placing the ball upon it, squared away to watch. He looked grim and expectant.

Nels was not so large a man as Nick, and did not look so formidable as he waved his club at the gaping cowboys. Still he was lithe, tough, and strong. Briskly, with an insouciant manner, he stepped up and delivered a mighty swing at the ball. He missed. The power and momentum of his swing flung him off his feet, and he actually turned upside down and spun round on his head.

The cowboys howled. Stillwell's stentorian laugh rolled across the mesa. Madeline and her guests found it impossible to restrain their mirth; and when Nels got up he cast a reproachful glance at them. His feelings were hurt.

His second attempt, not by any means so

violent, resulted in as clean a miss as the first, and brought jeers from the cowboys.

Nels's red face flamed redder. Angrily he swung again. The mound of sand spread over the teeing-ground, and the exasperating little ball rolled a few inches.

"Shore it's jest thet crooked club!" he declared.

He changed clubs, and made another signal failure. Rage suddenly possessing him, he began to swing wildly. Always it appeared the elusive little ball was not where he aimed. Stillwell hunched his huge bulk, leaned hands on knees, and roared his riotous mirth. The cowboys leaped up and down in glee.

"You cain't hit thet ball!" sang out one of the noisiest.

"Nels, you're too old!" Stillwell shouted. "Your eyes are no good!"

Nels slammed down the club; and when he straightened up, with the red leaving his face, then the real pride and fire of the man showed. He stepped off ten paces and turned toward the little mound upon which rested the ball. His arm shot down, elbow crooked, hand like a claw.

"Aw, Nels, it's jest fun—that's all!" yelled Stillwell.

But swift as a gleam of light Nels flashed his gun, and the report came with the action. Chips flew from the golf-ball as it tumbled from the mound. Nels had hit it without raising the dust. Then he dropped the gun back in its sheath and faced the cowboys.

"Mebbe my eyes ain't so orful bad," he said coolly, and started to walk off.

"But look aheah, Nels," replied Stillwell. "We come out to play gol-lof. We can't let you knock the ball around with your gun. What'd you want to get mad for? It's only fun. Now you an' Nick hang round heah an' be sociable. We ain't depreciatin' your company none, nor your usefulness on occasions; an' if you just hain't got inborn politeness sufficient to do the gallant before the ladies, why, remember Stewart's orders."

"Stewart's orders?" queried Nels, coming to a sudden halt.

"That's what I said," replied Stillwell with asperity. "His orders. Are you forgettin' orders? Wal, you're a fine cowboy. You an' Nick an' Monty, 'specially, are to obey orders."

Nels took off his sombrero and scratched his head.

"Bill, I reckon I'm some forgetful; but I was mad. I'd 'a' remembered pretty soon, an' mebbe my manners."

"Sure you would," replied Stillwell.

"Wal, now, we don't seem to be proceedin' much with my gol-lof team. Next ambitious player step up!"

In Ambrose, who showed some deftness at the driving stroke, Stillwell found one of his team. The succeeding players, however, were so poor and so evenly matched that the earnest Stillwell was in despair. He lost his temper just as easily as Nels had. Finally Ed Linton's wife appeared, riding up with Ambrose's wife, and perhaps this helped, for Ed suddenly disclosed ability that made Stillwell single him out.

"Let me coach you a little," said Bill.

"Sure, if you like," replied Ed; "but I know more about this game than you do."

"Wal, then, let's see you hit a ball straight. Don't sling your club as if you was ropin' a steer. Come round easy like an' hit straight."

Ed made several attempts, which, although better than those of his predecessors, were rather discouraging to the exacting coach. Presently, after a particularly atrocious shot, Stillwell strode in distress here and there, and finally stopped a dozen paces or more in front of the teeing-ground. Ed calmly made ready for another attempt.

"Fore!" he called.

Stillwell stared.

"Fore!" yelled Ed.

"Why're you hollerin' that way at me?" demanded Bill.

"I mean for you to lope off the horizon. Get back from in front!"

"Oh, that's one of them crazy words Monty is always hollerin'. Wal, I reckon I'm safe enough hyar. You couldn't hit me in a million years."

"Bill, ooze away," urged Ed.

"Didn't I say you couldn't hit me? What am I coachin' you for? It's because you hit crooked, ain't it? Wal, go ahead an' break your back."

Ed Linton was a short, heavy man, and his stocky build gave evidence of strength. His former strokes had not been made with much exertion, but now he got ready for a supreme effort. A sudden silence camped down upon the exuberant cowboys. It was one of those fateful moments when the air was charged with disaster. As Ed swung the club it fairly whistled.

Crack! Instantly came a thump; but

no one saw the ball until it dropped from Stillwell's shrinking body. His big hands went spasmodically to the place that hurt and a terrible groan rumbled from him.

Then the cowboys broke into a frenzy of mirth that seemed to find adequate expression only in a dancing and rolling accompaniment to their howls. Stillwell recovered his dignity as soon as he caught his breath, and he advanced with a rueful face.

"Wal, boys, it's on Bill," he said. "I'm a livin' proof of the pig-headedness of mankind. Ed, you win. You're captain of the team. You hit straight, an' if I hadn't been obstructin' the general atmosphere that ball would sure have gone clear to the Chiricahuas!" Then, making a megaphone of his huge hands, Stillwell yelled a blast of defiance at Monty and Link.

"Hey, you swell gol-lofers! We're waitin'. Come on if you ain't scared."

Instantly Monty and Link quit practising and, like two emperors, came stalking across the links.

"Guess my bluff didn't work much," said Stillwell. Then he turned to Madeline and her friends. "Sure I hope, Miss Majesty, that you-all won't weaken an' go over to the enemy. Monty is some eloquent, an' has a way of gettin' people to agree with him. He'll be plumb wild when he heahs what he an' Link are up against; but it's a square deal, because he wouldn't help us or lend the book that shows how to play. An' besides, it's policy for us to beat him. Now if you'll elect who's to be caddies an' umpire I'll be powerful obliged."

Madeline's friends were hugely amused over the prospective match, but, except for Dorothy and Castleton, they disclaimed any ambition for active participation. Accordingly Madeline appointed Castleton to judge the play, Dorothy to act as caddie for Ed Linton, and she herself decided to be caddie for Ambrose. While Stillwell beamingly announced this momentous news to his team and supporters, Monty and Link were striding up.

Both were diminutive in size, bow-legged, lame in one foot, and altogether unprepossessing. Link was young. Monty's years, more than twice Link's, had left their mark; but it would have been impossible to tell the veteran cowboy's age. As Stillwell said, Monty was burned to the color and hardness of a cinder. He never

noticed the heat, and always wore heavy sheepskin chaps with the wool outside. This made him look broader than he was long.

Link, always partial to leather, had, since he became Madeline's chauffeur, taken to leather altogether. He carried no weapon, but Monty wore a huge gun-sheath and gun. Link smoked a cigarette and looked coolly impudent. Monty was dark-faced, swaggering, for all the world like a barbarian chief.

"That Monty makes my flesh creep," said Helen, low-voiced. "Really, Mr. Stillwell, is he so bad—desperate—as I've heard? Did he ever kill anybody?"

"Sure—most as many as Nels," replied Stillwell cheerfully.

"Oh! And is that nice Mr. Nels a desperado, too? I wouldn't have thought so. He's so kind and old-fashioned and soft-voiced."

"Nels is sure an example of the duplicity of men, Miss Helen. Don't you listen to his soft voice. He's really as bad as a side-winder rattlesnake."

At this juncture Monty and Link reached the teeing-ground, and Stillwell went out to meet them. The other cowboys pressed forward to surround the trio. Madeline heard Stillwell's voice, and evidently he was explaining that his team was to have skilled advice during the play.

Suddenly there came from the center of the group a loud, angry roar that broke off as suddenly. Then followed excited voices all mingled together. Presently Monty appeared, breaking away from restraining hands, and he strode toward Madeline.

Monty Price had never been known to speak to a woman unless he was first addressed, and then he answered in blunt, awkward shyness. Upon this great occasion, however, it appeared that he meant to plead with Madeline, for he showed stress of emotion. Madeline had never become acquainted with Monty. She was a little in awe, if not in fear of him, and now she found it imperative to keep in mind that more than any other of the wild fellows on her ranch this one should be dealt with as if he were a big boy.

Monty removed his sombrero—something he had never done before—showing that his head was entirely bald. This was one of the marks of that terrible Montana prairie-fire through which he had fought to save the life of a child. Madeline did not for-

get it, and all at once she wanted to take Monty's side. Remembering Stillwell's wisdom, however, she forbore yielding to sentiment and called upon her wits.

"Miss—Miss Hammond," began Monty, stammering. "I'm extendin' admirin' greetin's to you an' your friends. Link an' me are right down proud to play the match game with you watchin'. But Bill says you're goin' to caddie for his team an' coach 'em on the fine points. An' I want to ask, all respectful, if thet's fair an' square?"

"Monty, that is for you to say," replied Madeline. "It was my suggestion; but if you object in the least, of course we shall withdraw. It seems fair to me, because you have learned the game, you are expert, and I understand the other boys have no chance with you. Then you have coached Link. I think it would be sportsmanlike of you to accept the handicap."

"Aw, a handicap! Thet was what Bill was drivin' at! Why didn't he say so? Every time Bill comes to a word thet's pie to us old golfers, he jest stumbles. Miss Majesty, you've made it all as clear as print; an' I may say with becomin' modesty thet you wasn't mistaken none about me bein' sportsmanlike. Me an' Link was born thet way. We accept the handicap. Lackin' thet handicap, I reckon Link an' me would have no ambish to play our most be-ootiful game. An' thankin' you, Miss Majesty, an' all your friends, I want to add thet if Bill's outfit couldn't beat us before, they've got a swell chanst now, with you ladies a watchin' me an' Link!"

Monty seemed to expand with pride as he delivered this speech. At the end he bowed low and turned away to join the group round Stillwell. Once more there arose animated discussion and argument and expostulation. One of the cowboys came for Castleton and led him away to discuss the ground rules.

It seemed to Madeline that the game never would begin. She strolled on the rim of the mesa, arm in arm with Edith Wayne, and while Edith talked she looked out over the gray valley leading to the rugged black mountains and the vast red wastes. In the foreground, on the gray slope, she saw cattle in movement and cowboys riding to and fro. She thought of Stewart.

Then Boyd Harvey came for them, saying that all the preliminary details had been

arranged. Stillwell met them half-way, and this cool, dry old cattleman, whose face and manner would scarcely change at the announcement of a cattle raid, now showed extreme agitation.

"Wal, Miss Majesty, we've gone an' made a fozzle right at the start," he said dejectedly.

"A fozzle? But the game has not yet begun," replied Madeline.

"A bad start, I mean. It's amazin' bad, an' we're licked already."

"What in the world is wrong?"

She wanted to laugh, but Stillwell's distress restrained her.

"Wal, it's this way. That blamed Monty is as cute an' slick as a fox. After he got done declaimin' about the handicap he an' Link was so happy to take, he got Castleton over hyar an' drove us all dotty with his crazy gol-lof names. Then he borrowed Castleton's gol-lof coat. I reckon borrowed is some kind word. He just about took that blazin' coat off the Englishman; though I ain't sayin' but that Castleton was agreeable when he tumbled to Monty's meanin', which was nothin' more'n to break Ambrose's heart. That coat dazzles Ambrose. You know how vain he is. Why, he'd die to get to wear that Englishman's gol-lof coat; an' Monty forestalled him. It's plumb pitiful to see the look in Ambrose's eyes. He won't be able to play much. I reckon Monty was right about brains bein' what wins!"

The game began. At first Madeline and Dorothy essayed to direct the endeavors of their respective players; but all they said and did only made their team play the worse. At the third hole they were two down and hopelessly bewildered. What with Monty's borrowed coat, with its dazzling effect upon Ambrose, and Stillwell's vociferous disgust, and the clamorous pursuit of the cowboy supporters, and the embarrassing presence of the ladies, Ambrose and Ed wore through all manner of strange play until it became ridiculous.

"Hey, Link!" came Monty's voice booming over the links. "Our esteemed rivals are playin' shinny!"

Madeline and Dorothy gave up presently, when the game became a rout; and they sat down with their followers to watch the finish of the match. It came with spectacular suddenness. A sharp yell pealed out, and all the cowboys turned attentively in its direction. A big black horse had

surmounted the rim of the mesa and was just breaking into a run. His rider yelled sharply to the cowboys. They wheeled to dash toward their grazing horses.

"That's Stewart. There is something wrong!" said Madeline in alarm.

XXII

CASTLETON stared. The other men exclaimed uneasily. The women sought Madeline's face with anxious eyes.

The black got into his stride and bore swiftly down upon them.

"Oh, see that horse run!" cried Helen. "See that fellow ride!"

Helen was not alone in her admiration. Madeline divided her emotions between growing alarm of some danger menacing and a thrill and quickening of pulse-beat that tingled over her whenever she saw Stewart in violent action. No action of his was any longer insignificant, but violent action meant much—might mean anything.

For one moment she remembered Stillwell and all his talk about fun and plots and tricks to amuse her guests. Then she discountenanced the thought. Stewart might lend himself to a little fun, but he cared too much for a horse to run him at that speed unless there was imperious need. That alone sufficed to answer Madeline's questioning curiosity.

Her alarm mounted to fear, not so much for herself as for her guests. But what danger could there be? She could think of nothing except the guerrillas.

Whatever threatened, it would be met and checked by this man Stewart who was thundering up on his fleet horse; and as he neared her, so that she could see the dark gleam of face and eyes, she had a strange feeling of comradeship and trust in her dependence upon him.

The big black was so close to Madeline and her friends that when Stewart pulled him the dust and sand kicked up by his pounding hoofs flew in their faces.

"What is it, Stewart?" cried Madeline.

"Guess I scared you, Miss Hammond," he replied; "but I'm some pressed for time. There's a gang of bandits hiding on the ranch, most likely in a deserted hut. They held up a train near Agua Prieta. Pat Hawe is with the posse that's trailing them, and you know Pat has no use for us. I'm afraid it wouldn't be pleasant for you or your guests to meet either the posse or the bandits."

"I fancy not," said Madeline, considerably relieved. "We'll hurry back to the house."

They exchanged no more speech at the moment, and Madeline's guests were silent. Perhaps Stewart's actions and looks belied his calm words. His piercing eyes roved round the rim of the mesa, and his face was as hard and stern as chiseled bronze.

Monty and Nick came galloping up, each leading several horses by the bridles. Nels appeared behind them with Majesty, and he was having trouble with the roan. Madeline observed that all the other cowboys had disappeared.

One sharp word from Stewart calmed Madeline's horse; the other horses, however, were frightened and not inclined to stand. The men mounted without trouble, as did Madeline and Florence; but Edith Wayne and Mrs. Beck, being nervous and almost helpless, were got into the saddle with some difficulty.

"Beg pardon, but I'm some pressed for time," said Stewart coolly, as with iron arm he forced Dorothy's horse almost to its knees.

Dorothy, who was active and plucky, climbed astride; and when Stewart loosed his hold on bit and mane, the horse doubled up and began to buck. Dorothy screamed as she shot into the air. Stewart, as quick as the horse, leaped forward and caught Dorothy in his arms. She had slipped head downward, and, had he not caught her, would have had a serious fall.

Handling her as if she were a child, Stewart turned her right side up to set her upon her feet. Dorothy evidently thought only of the spectacle she presented, and made startled motions to readjust her riding-habit. It was no time to laugh, though Madeline felt as if she wanted to. Besides, it was impossible to be anything but sober with Stewart in violent mood.

He had jumped at Dorothy's stubborn mount. All good cowboys are masters of horses. It was wonderful to see him conquer the vicious animal. He was cruel, perhaps, yet it was from necessity. When, presently, he led the horse back to Dorothy, she mounted without further trouble. Meanwhile Nels and Nick had lifted Helen into her saddle.

"We'll take the side trail," said Stewart shortly, as he swung upon the big black.

He led the way and the other cowboys trotted in the rear.

It was only a short distance to the rim of the mesa; but when Madeline saw the steep trail, narrow and choked with weathered stone, she felt that her guests would certainly flinch.

"That's a jolly bad course," observed Castleton.

The women appeared to be speechless.

Stewart checked his horse at the deep cut where the trail started down.

"Boys, drop over and go slow," he said, dismounting. "Flo, you follow. Now, ladies, let your horses loose and hold on. Lean forward and hang to the pommel. It looks bad, but the horses are used to such trails."

Helen followed closely after Florence; Mrs. Beck went next, and then Edith Wayne. Dorothy's horse balked.

"I'm not so—so frightened," said Dorothy. "If only he would behave!"

She began to urge him into the trail, making him rear, when Stewart grasped the bit and jerked the horse down.

"Put your foot in my stirrup," said Stewart. "We can't waste time!" He lifted her upon his horse and started him down over the rim. "Go on, Miss Hammond. I'll have to lead this nag down. It'll save time."

It was a loose trail. The weathered slopes seemed to slide under the feet of the horses. Dust-clouds formed; rocks rolled and rattled down; cactus spikes tore at horse and rider. Mrs. Beck broke out into laughter, and there was a note in it that suggested hysteria. Once or twice Dorothy murmured plaintively.

Half the time Madeline could not distinguish those ahead through the yellow dust. It was dry and made her cough. The horses snorted. She heard Stewart close behind, starting little avalanches that kept rolling on Majesty's fetlocks. She feared her horse's legs might be cut or bruised, for some of the stones crashed by and went rattling down the slope.

At length the clouds of dust thinned, and Madeline saw those before her ride out upon a level. Soon she was down, and Stewart also.

Here there was a delay, occasioned by Stewart changing Dorothy from his horse to her own. This struck Madeline as being singular, and made her thoughtful. In fact, the alert, quiet manner of all the cowboys was not reassuring. As they resumed the ride it was noticeable that Nels and Nick

were far in advance, Monty stayed far in the rear, and Stewart rode with the party.

Madeline heard Boyd Harvey ask Stewart if lawlessness, such as he had mentioned, was not unusual. Stewart replied that, except for occasional deeds of outlawry, such as might break out in any isolated section of the country, there had been peace and quiet along the border for years. It was the Mexican revolution that had revived wild times, with all the attendant raids and hold-ups and gun-packing. Madeline knew that they were really being escorted home under armed guard.

When they rounded the head of the mesa, bringing into view the ranch-house and the valley, she saw dust or smoke hovering over a hut upon the outskirts of the Mexican quarters. As the sun had set and the light was fading, she could not distinguish which it was.

Then Stewart set a fast pace for the house. In a few minutes the party was in the yard, ready and willing to dismount.

Stillwell appeared, ostensibly cheerful—too cheerful to deceive Madeline. She noted, also, that a number of armed cowboys were walking with their horses just below the house.

"Wal, you-all had a nice little run," Stillwell said, speaking generally. "I reckon there wasn't much need of it. Pat Hawe thinks he's got some outlaws corralled on the ranch—nothin' at all to be fussed up about. Stewart's that particular he won't have you meetin' with any rowdies."

Many and fervent were the expressions of relief from Madeline's feminine guests as they dismounted and went into the house. Madeline lingered behind to speak with Stillwell and Stewart.

"Now, Stillwell, out with it," she said briefly.

The old cattleman stared, and then he laughed, pleased with her keenness.

"Wal, Miss Majesty, there's goin' to be a fight somewhere, an' Stewart wanted to get you-all in before it come off. He says the valley's overrun by vaqueros an' guerrillas an' robbers, an' goodness knows what else."

He stamped off the porch, his huge spurs rattling, and started down the path toward the waiting men.

Stewart stood in his familiar attentive position, erect, silent, with a hand on pommel and bridle.

"Stewart, you are exceedingly—thoughtful of my interests," she said, wanting to thank him, and not readily finding words. "I would not know what to do without you. Is there danger?"

"I'm not sure; but I want to be on the safe side."

She hesitated. It was no longer easy for her to talk to Stewart, and she did not know why.

"May I know the special orders you gave Nels and Nick and Monty?" she asked.

"Who said I gave those boys special orders?"

"I heard Stillwell tell them so."

"Of course I'll tell you, if you insist; but why should you worry over something that'll likely never happen?"

"I insist, Stewart," she replied quietly.

"My orders were that at least one of them must be on guard near you day and night—never to be out of hearing of your voice."

"I thought as much. But why Nels or Monty or Nick? That seems rather hard on them. For that matter, why put any one to keep guard over me? Do you not trust my other cowboys?"

"I'd trust their honesty, but not their ability."

"Ability? Of what nature?"

"With guns."

"Stewart!" she exclaimed.

"Miss Hammond, you have been having such a good time entertaining your guests that you forget. I'm glad of that. I wish you had not questioned me."

"Forget what?"

"Don Carlos and his guerrillas."

"Indeed I have not forgotten. Stewart, you still think Don Carlos tried to make off with me, and may try it again?"

"I don't think. I know."

"And besides all your other duties you yourself have shared the watch with these three cowboys?"

"Yes."

"And this has been going on without my knowledge?"

"Yes."

"Since when?"

"Since I brought you down from the mountains last month."

"How long is it to continue?"

"That's hard to say. Till the revolution is over, anyhow."

She mused a moment, looking away to

the west, where the great void was filling with red haze. She believed implicitly in him, and the menace hovering near her fell like a shadow upon her present happiness.

"What must I do?" she asked.

"I think you ought to send your friends back East, and go with them, until this guerrilla war is over."

"Why, Stewart! They would be broken-hearted, and so should I."

He had no reply for that.

"If I do not take your advice it will be the first time since I have come to look to you for so much," she went on. "Cannot you suggest something else? My friends are having such a splendid visit. Helen is getting well. Oh, I should be sorry to see them go before they want to!"

"We might take them up into the mountains and camp out for a while," he said presently. "I know a wild place up among the crags. It's a hard climb, but worth the work. I never saw a more beautiful spot. Fine water, and it will be cool. Pretty soon it'll be too hot here for your party to go out of doors."

"You mean to hide me away among the crags and clouds," replied Madeline, with a laugh.

"Well, it'd amount to that. Your friends needn't know. Perhaps in a few weeks this spell of trouble on the border will be over till fall."

"You say it's a hard climb up to this place?"

"It sure is. Your friends will get the real thing if they make that trip."

"That suits me. Helen, especially, wants something to happen; and they are all crazy for excitement."

"They'd get it up there—bad trails, cañons to head, steep climbs, wind-storms, thunder and lightning, rain, mountain-lions, and wildcats."

"Very well, I am decided. Stewart, of course you will take charge? I don't believe I—Stewart, isn't there something more you could tell me—why you think my own personal liberty is in peril?"

"Yes, but do not ask me what it is. If I hadn't been a rebel soldier I would never have known."

"If you had not been a rebel soldier, where would Madeline Hammond be now?" she asked earnestly.

He made no reply.

"Stewart," she continued, with warm impulse, "you once mentioned a debt you

owed me." Seeing his dark face pale, she wavered, then went on. "It is paid."

"No, no!" he answered huskily.

"Yes! I will not have it otherwise."

"No. That never can be paid."

Madeline held out her hand.

"It is paid, I tell you," she repeated.

Suddenly he drew back from the outstretched white hand, which seemed to fascinate him.

"I'd kill a man to touch your hand, and go to perdition for doing it; but I won't touch it on the terms you offer."

His unexpected passion disconcerted her.

"Stewart, no man ever before refused to shake hands with me, for any reason. It—it is scarcely flattering," she said, with a little laugh. "Why won't you? Because you think I offer it as mistress to servant—rancher to cowboy?"

"No."

"Then why? The debt you owed me is paid. I cancel it. So why not shake hands upon it, as men do?"

"I won't—that's all."

"I fear you are ungracious, whatever your reason," she replied. "Still, I may offer it again some day. Good night!"

He said good night and turned. Madeline wonderingly watched him go down the path with his hand on the black horse's neck.

XXIII

SHE went in to rest a little before dressing for dinner, and, being fatigued from the day's riding and excitement, she fell asleep. When she awoke it was twilight. She wondered why her Mexican maid had not come to her, and she rang the bell. The maid did not put in an appearance, nor was there any answer to the ring.

The house seemed unusually quiet. It was a brooding silence, which presently broke to the sound of footsteps on the porch. Madeline recognized Stillwell's tread, though he appeared to be stepping more lightly than usual. Then she heard him call softly in at the open door of her office. The suggestion of caution in his voice suited the strangeness of his walk.

With a boding sense of trouble she hurried through the rooms. He was standing outside her office door.

"Stillwell!" she exclaimed.

"Anybody with you?" he asked in a low tone.

"No."

"Please come out on the porch," he said somewhat peremptorily.

She complied. Stillwell's grave face, paler than she had ever beheld it, caused her to stretch an appealing hand toward him. He intercepted it and held it in his own.

"Miss Majesty, I'm amazin' sorry to tell worrisome news." He spoke almost in a whisper, cautiously looked about him, and seemed both hurried and mysterious. "The fact is, we're in a bad fix. If your guests ain't scared out of their skins, it'll be owin' to your nerve an' how you carry out Stewart's orders."

"You can rely upon me," replied Madeline firmly, though she trembled.

"Wal, what we're up against is this—that gang of bandits Pat Hawe was chasin' are hidin' in the house!"

"In the house?" echoed Madeline, aghast.

"Miss Majesty, it's the amazin' truth, an' shamed indeed am I to admit it. Stewart—why, he's wild with rage, to think it could hev happened. You see it couldn't hev happened if I hedn't sloped the boys off to the gol-lof links, an' if Stewart hedn't rid out on the mesa after us. It's my fault. I've hed too much femininity around fer my old haid. Gene cussed me—he cussed me sure scandalous. But now we've got to face it—to figger—"

"Do you mean that a gang of hunted outlaws — bandits — have actually taken refuge somewhere in my house?" demanded Madeline.

"I sure do. Seems powerful strange to me why you didn't find somethin' was wrong, seein' all your servants hev sloped."

"Gone? Ah! I missed my maid. I wondered why no lights were lit. Where did my servants go?"

"Down to the Mexican quarters, an' scared half to death. Now listen. When Stewart left you an hour or so ago, he follered me direct to where me an' the boys was tryin' to keep Pat Hawe from tearin' the ranch to pieces. At that we was helpin' Pat all we could to find them bandits; but when Stewart got there he made a difference. Pat was nasty before, but seein' Stewart made him wuss. I reckon Gene to Pat is the same as red to a greaser bull. Anyway, when the sheriff set fire to an old 'dobe hut, Stewart called him, an' called him hard. Pat Hawe hed six fellers with him, an' from all appearances bandit-hunt-

in' was some *fiesta*. There was a row, an' it looked bad fer a little; but Gene was cool an' he controlled the boys. Then Pat an' his tough depooties went on huntin'. That huntin', Miss Majesty, petered out into what was only a farce. I reckon Pat could hev kept on foolin' me an' the boys, but as soon as Stewart showed up on the scene—wal, either Pat got to blunderin' or else we-all shed our blinders. Pat Hawe wasn't lookin' hard fer any bandits; he wasn't daid set huntin' anythin', unless it was trouble fer Stewart. Finally, when Pat's men made fer our storehouse, where we keep ammunition, grub, liquors, an' sich, then Gene called a halt, an' ordered Pat Hawe off the ranch. Pat hollered law. He pulled down off the shelf his old stock-grudge on Stewart, accusin' him over again of that greaser murder last fall. Stewart made him look like a fool—showed him up as bein' scared of the bandits, or hevin' some reason fer slopin' off the trail. Anyway, the row started all right. In the thick of it, when Stewart was drivin' Pat an' his crowd off the place, one of them depooties lost his haid an' went fer his gun. Nels throwed his gun an' crippled the feller's arm. Monty jumped then an' throwed two forty-fives, an' fer a second or so it looked ticklish; but the bandit-hunters crawled, an' then lit out."

Stillwell paused in the rapid delivery of his narrative; he still retained Madeline's hand, as if by that he might comfort her.

"After Pat left we put our haid together," began the old cattleman, with a long respiration. "We rounded up a lad who had seen a dozen or so fellers—he wouldn't say they was greasers—breakin' through the shrubbery to the back of the house. That was while Stewart was ridin' out to the mesa. Then this lad seen your servants all runnin' down the hill toward the village. Now, heah's the way Gene figgers. There sure was some deviltry down along the railroad, an' Pat Hawe trailed bandits up to the ranch. He hunts hard, an' then all to wunst he quits. Stewart says Pat Hawe wasn't scared, but he got wind in some way that there was in the gang of bandits some fellers he didn't want to ketch—*sabe*? Then Gene, quicker'n a flash, springs his plan on me. He'd go down to Padre Marcos an' hev him help to find out all possible from your Mexican servants. I was to hurry up hyar an' tell you—give you orders, Miss Majesty. Ain't

that amazin' strange? You're to assemble all your guests in the kitchen. Make a grand bluff an' pretend as your help has left, that it'll be great fun fer your guests to cook dinner. The kitchen is the safest room in the house. While you're joshin' your party along, makin' a kind of picnic out of it, I'll place cowboys in the long corridor, an' also outside in the corner where the kitchen joins on to the main house. It's pretty sure the bandits think no one's wise to where they're hid. Stewart says they're in that end room where the alfalfa is, an' they'll slope in the night. Of course, with me an' the boys watchin', you-all will be safe to go to bed. We're to rouse your guests early before daylight, to hit the trail up into the mountains. Tell them to pack outfits before goin' to bed. Say, as your servants hev sloped, you might as well go campin' with the cowboys. That's all. If we hev any luck, your friends'll never know they've been sittin' on a powder-mine."

"Stillwell, do you advise that trip up into the mountains?" asked Madeline.

"I reckon I do, considerin' everythin'. Now, Miss Majesty, I've used up a lot of time explainin'. You'll sure keep your nerve?"

"Yes," Madeline replied, and was surprised at herself.

"Better tell Florence. She'll be a power of comfort to you. I'm goin' now to fetch up the boys."

Instead of returning to her room, Madeline went through the office into the long corridor. It was almost as dark as night. She fancied she saw a slow-gliding figure darker than the surrounding gloom; and she entered upon the fulfilment of her part of the plan in something like trepidation. Her footsteps were noiseless.

Finding the door to the kitchen, and going in, she struck lights. Upon passing out again she made certain she discerned a dark shape, now motionless, crouching along the wall; but she mistrusted her vivid imagination. It took all her boldness to enable her unconcernedly and naturally to strike the corridor light. Then she went on through her own rooms and thence into the *patio*.

Her guests laughingly and gladly entered into the spirit of the occasion. Madeline fancied her acting must have been pretty nearly perfect, seeing that it deceived even Florence.

They trooped merrily into the kitchen. Madeline, delaying at the door, took a sharp but unobtrusive glance down the great, barnlike hall. She saw nothing but blank, dark space.

Suddenly, from one side, not a rod distant, protruded a pale, gleaming face, breaking the even blackness. Instantly it flashed back out of sight; yet that time was long enough for Madeline to see a pair of glittering eyes and to recognize them as Don Carlos's.

Without betraying either hurry or alarm she closed the door. It had a heavy bolt, which she slowly, noiselessly shot. Then the cold amaze that had all but stunned her into inaction throbbed into wrath. How dared that Mexican steal into her home? What did he mean? Was he one of the bandits supposed to be hidden in her house?

She was thinking herself into greater anger and excitement, and probably would have betrayed herself, had not Florence, who had evidently seen her bolt the door, and read her thoughts, come toward her with a bright, intent, questioning look. Madeline caught herself in time.

Thereupon she gave each of her guests a duty to perform. Leading Florence into the pantry, she unburdened herself of the secret in one brief whisper. Florence's reply was to point out of the open window, passing which was a file of stealthily moving cowboys. Then Madeline lost both anger and fear, retaining only the glow of excitement.

Madeline could be gay. She initiated the abandonment of dignity by calling Castleton into the pantry, and, while interesting him in some pretext or other, imprinting the outlines of her flour-covered hands upon the back of his black coat. Castleton innocently returned to the kitchen, to be greeted with a roar.

That surprising act of the hostess set the pace, and there followed a merry, noisy time. Everybody helped. The miscellaneous collection of dishes so confusingly contrived made up a dinner which they all heartily enjoyed. Madeline enjoyed it herself, even with the feeling of a sword hanging suspended over her.

The hour was late when she rose from the table and told her guests to go to their rooms, to don their riding-clothes, to pack what they needed for the long and adventurous camping-trip, which she hoped

would be the climax of their Western experience, and to snatch a little sleep before the cowboys roused them for the early start.

Madeline went immediately to her room and was getting out her camping apparel when a knock interrupted her. She thought Florence had come to help her pack; but the knock was upon the door opening out on the porch. It was repeated.

"Who's there?" she questioned.

"Stewart," came the reply.

She opened the door. He stood on the threshold. Beyond him, indistinct in the gloom, were several cowboys.

"May I speak to you?" he asked.

"Certainly." She hesitated a moment, then asked him in, and closed the door.

"Is—is everything all right?"

"No. These bandits stick to cover pretty close. They must have found out we're on the watch. But I'm sure we'll get you and your friends away before anything starts. I wanted to tell you that I've talked with your servants. They were just scared. They'll come back to-morrow, as soon as Bill gets rid of this gang. You needn't worry about them or your property."

"Do you have any idea who is hiding in the house?"

"I was worried some at first. Pat Hawe acted queer. I imagined he'd discovered he was trailing bandits who might turn out to be his smuggling guerrilla cronies. But talking with your servants, and finding a bunch of horses hidden down in the mesquit behind the pond, I changed my mind. My idea is that a cowardly handful of riffraff outcasts from the border have hidden in your house, more by accident than design. We'll let them go—get rid of them without even a shot. If I didn't think so—well, I'd be considerably worried. It would make a different state of affairs."

"Stewart, you are wrong," she said.

He started, but his reply did not follow swiftly. The expression of his eyes altered. Presently he spoke:

"How so?"

"I saw one of these bandits. I distinctly recognized him."

One long step brought him close to her.

"Who was he?" demanded Stewart.

"Don Carlos."

He muttered low and deep, then said:

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely. I saw his figure twice in the hall, then his face in the light. I could never mistake his eyes."

"Did he know you saw him?"

"I am not positive, but I think so. Oh, he must have known! I was standing full in the light. I had entered the door, then purposely stepped out. His face showed from around a corner, and swiftly flashed out of sight."

Madeline was tremblingly conscious that Stewart underwent a transformation. She saw as well as felt the leaping passion that changed him.

"Call your friends—get them in here," he ordered tersely, and wheeled toward the door.

"Stewart—wait," she said.

He turned. His white face, his burning eyes, his presence now charged with definite, fearful meaning, influenced her strangely, weakened her.

"What will you do?" she asked.

"That needn't concern you. Get your party in here. Bar the windows and lock the doors. You'll be safe."

"Stewart! Tell me what you intend to do."

"I won't tell you," he replied, and turned away again.

"But I must know," she said. With a hand on his arm she detained him. She saw how he halted—felt the shock in him as she touched him. "Oh, I do know. You mean to fight!"

"Well, Miss Hammond, isn't it about time?" he asked. Evidently he overcame a violent passion for instant action. There were weariness, dignity, and even reproof in his question. "The fact of that Mexican's presence here in your house ought to prove to you the nature of the case. These fellows have found out you won't stand for any fighting on the part of your men. Don Carlos is a sneak, a coward, yet he's not afraid to hide in your own house. He has learned you won't let your cowboys hurt anybody. He's taking advantage of it. He'll rob, burn, and make off with you. He'll murder, too, if it falls his way. These greasers use knives in the dark. So I ask, isn't it about time for us to stop him?"

"Stewart, I forbid you to fight unless in self-defense! I forbid you!"

"I reckon what I mean to do is self-defense. Haven't I tried to explain to you that just now there are wild times along this stretch of border? Must I tell you again that Don Carlos is hand and glove with the revolution? The rebels are crazy to stir up the United States. You are a

woman of prominence. Don Carlos would make off with you. If he got you, what an easy matter to cross the border with you! And where would the hue and cry go? Through the troops along the border! To New York! To Washington! Why, it would mean what the rebels are working for—United States intervention; in other words, war!”

“Oh, surely you exaggerate?” she cried.

“Maybe so; but I’m beginning to see the don’s game. And Miss Hammond, I—it’s awful for me to think what you’d suffer if Don Carlos got you over the line. I know these low-caste Mexicans. I’ve been among the peons—the slaves.”

“Stewart, don’t let Don Carlos get me,” replied Madeline, in sweet directness.

She saw him shake, saw his throat swell as he swallowed hard, saw the hard fierceness return to his face.

“I won’t! That’s why I’m going after him.”

“But I forbade you to start a fight deliberately.”

“Then I reckon I’ll go ahead and start one without your permission,” he replied shortly, and again he wheeled.

This time, when Madeline caught his arm, she held to it, even after he stopped.

“No!” she said imperiously.

He shook off her detaining hand and strode forward.

“Please don’t go,” she called beseechingly; but he kept on. “Stewart!”

She ran ahead of him, intercepted him, and turned to face him with her back against the door. He swept out a long arm as if to brush her aside; but it wavered and fell. Haggard, troubled, with working face, he stood before her.

“It’s for your sake,” he expostulated.

“If it is for my sake, then do what pleases me.”

“These guerrillas will knife somebody. They’ll burn the house. They’ll make off with you. They’ll do something bad, unless we stop them.”

“Let us risk all that,” she importuned.

“But it’s a terrible risk, and it oughtn’t be run!” he exclaimed passionately. “I know best here. Stillwell upholds me. Let me out, Miss Hammond. I’m going to take the boys and go after these guerrillas!”

“No!”

“Good Heavens!” exclaimed Stewart. “Why not let me go? It’s the thing to do. I’m sorry to distress you and your guests.

Why not put an end to Don Carlos’s badgering? Is it because you’re afraid a rumpus will spoil your friends’ visit?”

“It isn’t—not this time.”

“You’re sick to think of a little greaser blood staining the halls of your home?”

“No!”

“Well, then, why keep me from doing what I know is best?”

“Stewart, I—I—” she faltered in growing agitation. “I’m frightened—confused. All this is too—too much for me. I’m not a coward. If you *have* to fight, you’ll see I’m not a coward. But your way seems so reckless—that hall is so dark—the guerrillas would shoot from behind doors. You’re so wild, so daring. You’d rush right into peril. Is that necessary? I think—I mean—I don’t know just why I feel so—so about you doing it. But I believe it’s because I’m afraid you—you might be hurt.”

“You’re afraid I—I might be hurt?” he echoed wonderingly, the hard whiteness of his face warming, flushing, glowing.

“Yes!”

The single, unequivocal word, with all it might mean, with all it might not mean, softened him as if by magic, made him gentle, amazed, shy as a boy, stifling under a torrent of emotions.

Madeline thought she had persuaded him—worked her will with him. Then another of his startlingly sudden moves told her that she had reckoned too quickly. This move was to put her firmly aside so that he could pass; and Madeline, seeing that he would not hesitate to lift her out of the way, surrendered the door.

He turned on the threshold. His face was still working, but the flame-pointed gleam of his eyes indicated the return of that cowboy ruthlessness.

“I’m going to drive Don Carlos and his gang out of the house!” declared Stewart. “I think I may promise you to do it without a fight; but if it takes a fight, off he goes!”

XXIV

As Stewart departed from one door Florence knocked upon another. Madeline, far shaken out of her usual serenity, admitted the Western girl with more than gladness. Just to have her near helped Madeline to get back her balance.

She was conscious of Florence’s sharp scrutiny, and then of a sweet, deliberate change of manner. Florence might have

been burning with curiosity to know more about the bandits hidden in the house, the plans of the cowboys, the reason for Madeline's suppressed emotion; but instead of asking questions she introduced the important subject of what to take on the camping-trip.

For an hour they discussed the need of this and that article, selected the things most needful, and then packed them in Madeline's duffel-bags. That done, they decided to lie down, fully dressed as they were in riding-costume, and sleep, or at least rest, during the little remaining time left before the call to saddle.

Madeline turned out the light. Peeping through her window, she saw dark forms standing sentinel-like in the gloom. When she lay down she heard soft steps on the path. This fidelity to her swelled her heart, while the need of it presaged that fearful something which, since Stewart's passionate appeal to her, haunted her as inevitable.

Madeline did not expect to sleep, yet she did, and only a moment seemed to have passed until Florence called her. She followed Florence outside. It was the dark hour before dawn. She could discern saddled horses being held by cowboys. There was an air of hurry and mystery about the departure.

Helen, who came tiptoeing out with Madeline's other guests, whispered that it was like an escape. She was delighted. The others were amused. To Madeline it was indeed an escape.

In the darkness Madeline could not descry how many escorts her party was to have. She heard low voices, the champing of bits, and the thumping of hoofs; and she recognized Stewart when he led up Majesty for her to mount. Then came a pattering of soft feet and the whining of dogs. Cold noses touched her hands, and she saw the long, gray, shaggy shapes of her pack of Russian wolfhounds. The fact that Stewart meant to let them go with her was another instance of the care with which he studied her pleasure. She loved to be out with the hounds and her horse.

Stewart led Majesty out into the darkness past a line of mounted horses.

"Guess we're ready," he said. "I'll make the count."

He went rapidly along the waiting line, and when he returned Madeline heard him say several times:

"Now everybody ride close to the horse in front, and keep quiet till daylight!"

Then the snorting and pounding of the big black horse in front of her told Madeline that Stewart had mounted.

"All right—we're off!" he called.

Madeline lifted Majesty's bridle and let the roan go. There came a crack and crunch of gravel, fire struck from stone, and then the steady short *clip-clop* of iron hoofs on hard ground. Madeline could just discern Stewart and his black outlined in shadowy gray before her; yet they were almost within touching distance. Once or twice one of the wolfhounds leaped up at her and whined joyously. A thick belt of darkness lay low and seemed to thin out above to a gray fog through which a few wan stars showed.

It was altogether an unusual departure from the ranch; and Madeline found herself thrillingly sensitive to the soft beat of hoofs, the feel of cool, moist air, the dim sight of Stewart's dark figure. The caution, the early start before dawn, the enforced silence—these lent the occasion all that was needful to make it stirring.

Majesty plunged into a gully, where sand and rough going made Madeline stop romancing to attend to riding. In the darkness it was not so easy to keep close to Stewart, even on smooth trails, and now she had to be watchfully attentive to do it. There followed a long march through dragging sand. During this the blackness gradually changed to gray. At length Majesty climbed out of the wash, and once more his iron shoes rang on stone.

The figure of Stewart and his horse loomed more distinctly in Madeline's sight. Bending over, she tried to see the trail, but could not. She wondered how Stewart could follow a trail in the dark. His eyes must be as piercing as they sometimes looked.

As Majesty climbed steadily, Madeline saw the gray darkness change and lighten, lose its substance, and reveal the grotesque shapes of yucca and ocotillo. Dawn was about to break. All at once, to her surprise, Stewart and his powerful horse stood clear in her sight. She saw the characteristic rock and cactus and brush that covered the foot-hills. The trail was old and seldom used, and it zigzagged and turned and twisted.

Looking back, she saw the short, squat figure of Monty Price humped over his

saddle. Behind Monty rode Dorothy Coombs, and next loomed up the lofty form of Nick Steele.

Bright daylight came, and Madeline saw that the trail was leading up through foot-hills. It led through shallow gullies full of stones and brush washed down by floods. At every turn Madeline expected to come upon water and the waiting pack-train; but time passed, and miles of climbing, and no water or horses were met. Expectation in Madeline gave place to desire; she was hungry.

Presently Stewart's horse went splashing into a shallow pool. Beyond that, damp places in the sand showed here and there, and again more water in rocky pockets. Stewart kept on. It was eight o'clock by Madeline's watch when, upon turning into a wide hollow, she saw horses grazing on spare grass, a great pile of canvas-covered bundles, and a fire round which cowboys and two Mexican women were busy.

Madeline sat her horse and reviewed her followers as they rode up single file. Her guests were in merry mood, and they all talked at once.

"Breakfast—and rustle!" called out Stewart without ceremony.

"No need to tell me to rustle," said Helen. "This air makes me simply ravenous!"

The hurry order, however, did not interfere with the meal being somewhat of a picnic. While they ate and talked and laughed, the cowboys were packing horses and burros. As soon as the train was in readiness, Stewart started it off in the lead to break trail.

A heavy growth of shrub interspersed with rock and cactus covered the slopes; and now all the trail appeared to be up-hill. It was not a question of comfort for Madeline and her party, for comfort was impossible; it was a matter of making the travel possible for them. Florence wore corduroy breeches and high top-boots, and the advantage of this masculine garb was at once in evidence. The riding-habits of the other ladies suffered considerably from the sharp spikes. It took all Madeline's watchfulness to save her horse's legs, to pick the best bits of open ground, to make cut-offs from the trail, and to protect herself from outreaching thorny branches; so that the time sped by without her knowing it.

The pack-train forged ahead, and the trailing couples grew farther apart. At

noon they got out of the foot-hills, to face the real ascent of the mountains. The sun beat down hotly. There was little breeze; the dust rose thick and hung in a pall. The view was restricted, and what scenery lay open to the eye was dreary and drab, a barren monotony of slow-mounting slopes, ridged by rocky cañons.

Once Stewart waited for Madeline. As she came up, he said:

"We're going to have a storm."

"That will be a relief. It's so hot and dusty," replied Madeline.

"Shall I call a halt and make camp?"

"What do you think best?"

"Well, if we have a good, healthy thunder-storm," said Stewart, "it will be something new for your friends. I think we'd be wise to keep on the go. There's no place to make a good camp here. The wind would blow us off this slope, if the rain didn't wash us off. It'll take all-day travel to reach a good camp-site, and I don't promise that. We're making slow time. If it rains, let it rain. The pack outfit is well covered. We shall have to get wet."

"Surely," replied Madeline, and she smiled at his inference. She knew what a storm was in that country, and her guests had yet to experience one. "If it rains, let it rain."

Stewart rode on and Madeline followed. Up the slope toiled and nodded the pack-animals, the little burros going easily where the horses labored. Their packs, like the humps of camels, bobbed from side to side. Stones rattled down; the heat-waves wavered black; the dust puffed up and sailed. The sky was a pale blue, like heated steel, except where dark clouds peeped over the mountain crests. A heavy, sultry atmosphere made breathing difficult.

Down the slope the trailing party stretched out in twos and threes; and it was easy to distinguish the weary riders.

Half a mile farther up Madeline could see over the foot-hills to the north and west; and she forgot the heat and weariness and discomfort for her guests in wide, unlimited prospects of sun-scorched earth. She marked the gray valley, the black mountains, the red gateway of the desert, and the dim, shadowy peaks, blue as the sky they pierced.

Then there came a respite from the steep climb, and the way led through a matted, storm-wrenched forest of stunted cedar-trees. Even up to this elevation the desert

reached with its gaunt hand. The clouds overspreading the sky, hiding the sun, made a welcome change. The pack-train rested, and Stewart and Madeline waited for the party to come up. Here he briefly explained to her that Don Carlos and his bandits had left the ranch some time in the night. Thunder rumbled in the distance and a faint wind rustled the scant foliage of the cedars.

An hour later the party had climbed above the cedar flat and was rounding the side of a great bare ridge that long had hidden the crags. The last burro of the pack-train plodded over the ridge out of Madeline's sight. She looked backward down the slope, amused to see her guests change wearily from side to side in their saddles. Far to the west the sky was still clear, with shafts of sunlight shooting down from behind the encroaching clouds.

Stewart reached the summit of the ridge, and, though only a few rods ahead, he waved to her, sweeping his hand round to what he saw beyond. It was an impressive gesture, and Madeline, never having climbed as high as this, anticipated much.

Majesty surmounted the last few steps and halted beside Stewart's black. To Madeline the scene was as if the world had changed. The ridge was a mountain top. It dropped before her into a black, stoneridged shrub-patched, many-cañoned gulf. Eastward, beyond the gulf, bare mountain-heads loomed up. Upward, on the right, led giant steps of cliff and bench and weathered slope to the fir-bordered and pine-fringed crags, standing dark and bare against the stormy sky.

Inky clouds were piling across the peaks, obscuring the highest ones. A fork of white lightning flashed, and, like the looming of an avalanche, thunder followed.

That bold world of broken rock under the slow mustering of storm-clouds was a grim, awe-inspiring spectacle. The fierce desert had reached up to meet the majestic heights where heat and wind and frost and lightning and flood contended in everlasting strife. And before their onslaught this mighty upflung world of rugged stone was crumbling, splitting, wearing to ruin.

Madeline glanced at Stewart. He had forgotten her presence. Immovable as stone he sat his horse. Dark-faced, dark-eyed, and like an Indian unconscious of thought, he watched and watched. To see him thus

was to divine the affinity between the soul of this primitive man and the savage environment that had developed him.

A cracking of iron-shod hoofs broke the spell. Monty had reached the summit.

"Gene, what it won't all be doin' in a minute Moses hisself couldn't tell!" observed Monty.

Then Dorothy climbed to his side and looked.

"Isn't it just perfectly lovely?" she exclaimed. "But I wish it wouldn't storm. We'll all get wet!"

Once more Stewart faced the ascent, keeping to the slow heave of the ridge as it rose southward toward the looming spires of rock. Soon he was off smooth ground, and Madeline, some rods behind him, looked back with concern at her friends. Here the real toil, the real climb began; and a mountain storm was about to burst in all its fury.

Stewart waited for Madeline under the lee of a shelving cliff, where the cowboys had halted the pack-train. Majesty was sensitive to the flashes of lightning. Madeline patted his neck and softly called to him. The weary burros nodded; the Mexican women covered their heads with their mantles.

Stewart untied the slicker at the back of Madeline's saddle and helped her on with it. Then he put on his own. The other cowboys followed suit.

A blue-white, jagged rope of lightning burned down out of the clouds, and instantly a thunder-clap crashed, seeming to shake the foundations of the earth. Then it rolled from cloud to cloud, boomed along the peaks, and reverberated from deep to low, at last to rumble away into silence.

Madeline felt the electricity in Majesty's mane, and it seemed to tingle through her nerves. This moment of the breaking of the storm, with the strange, growing roar of wind, like a moaning monster, was pregnant with a heart-disturbing emotion. Glorious it was to be free, healthy, out in the open, under the shadow of the mountain and cloud, in the teeth of the wind and rain!

Another dazzling blue blaze showed the bold mountainside and the storm-driven clouds. In the flare of light Madeline saw Stewart's face.

"Are you afraid?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied simply.

Then the thunderbolt racked the heavens.

(To be continued)

THE STAGE

THE NEW YEAR WITH THE STARS

IN deciding what they shall present for the new season, it is natural that managers should look back over the old one and try to deduce what the public seems to like best, as shown by the measure of support given to the varying attractions. Judged by the announcements already made for 1913-1914, the trend of popular taste is toward musical comedy. At any

rate, the section in my forecast file devoted to offerings of that more or less frivolous *genre* is the most crowded of any.

This is matter for surprise, as it doubtless is for regret to the real drama-lover. Musical comedy is the most expensive production a manager can make, and he gets no more for his seats than if he were staging a straight play containing only four people and one set of scenery. As to the disapproval of the highbrows, those gen-



HAZEL DAWN, WHO IS TO APPEAR IN THE NEW MUSICAL PIECE,
"WHO SHOT THE GOVERNOR?"

From a photograph by the Dover Street Studios, London

erally unhappy individuals may as well realize once for all that they are a helpless minority.

Here you have the one touch of agreement that makes London and New York



MAY ALLISON, IN "THE QUAKER GIRL."

From a photograph by Marceau, New York

kin. They are both hopelessly Philistine when it comes to art for art's sake. And it is bound to be so, except for the sporadic exceptions that prove the rule. All the stage societies in two hemispheres cannot make Latins of either the British or the Americans.

In New York and London people go to the theater to be entertained without thinking. In Paris, in Berlin, in Vienna, they go as a matter of intellectual pastime—or, at any rate, they used to do so. If there is to be any alteration in conditions, it is

the Continental countries that will change. We may regret it, but such is the case.

And now, in the effort to get as close to the heavens as we can in this period of matter-of-fact commercialism, we may as well begin with the stars in looking over the announcements for the coming theatrical season in the United States. And in the spirit of hospitality we will start off with the visiting luminaries, the most noted of whom is Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, the honors of his knighthood fresh upon him as he arrives for his farewell tour.

Why Sir Johnston should wish to leave a profession he has done so much to adorn and dignify is best known to himself. Certainly no reason for this early retirement is apparent in his work, or in any lack of public support for it. Nor can it be that age is weighing heavily upon him, for he is only sixty. He was born in London, and meant to be an artist, but went on the stage in 1874. Had he not achieved a repertory, I should hazard the opinion that he might be retiring for fear of never finding again a play so charmingly adapted to his use as was the last novelty he brought out, five years ago—Jerome K. Jerome's "The Passing of the Third Floor Back."

His good-by to the London stage was said at the old Drury Lane Theater in "Hamlet," on June 6. It was a great night, coming in the very next week after the bestowal of his title. In the course of his speech at the end, he made a passing allusion to the inroads of the motion picture in these words:

"We need not fear that anything can touch the spoken word upon the stage."

Nevertheless, that he believes the film has its place is proven by his devoting three weeks, at the close of his London season, to posing with his entire company for the Gaumont people in "Hamlet." The pictures were all taken at three places in England—at Walton-on-Thames; at the home of Lady Robertson's sister, Maxine Elliott, in Bushey; and at Lulworth Cove, in Dorset, where a castle was especially built at the cost of thousands for three days' use.

Some chagrin is felt in England that Sir Johnston should say his final farewell to the boards in America rather than in his own country. After his two forthcoming seasons in the United States and Canada, it was suggested that he should give a few more performances in his native city.

"Oh, no," he answered with a smile to the London *Evening News* reporter who



OLIVE WYNDHAM, APPEARING FOR A SECOND SEASON IN "WHAT HAPPENED TO MARY"

From a photograph by Sarony, New York



LA BELLE LEONORA, A SPANISH MUSIC-HALL ARTIST WHO IS A FAVORITE IN PARIS AND LONDON

From a photograph by the Dover Street Studios, London

voiced the hope. "I cannot think of it. To-night's must be my last appearance here. A repetition of farewells has a comic side which does not appeal to me."

Oddly enough, the other English star who is shortly to visit America made his first appearance on the stage in Denver, Colorado, with the late Daniel Bandman's company as the servant in "East Lynne." Cyril Maude was also born in London, where he has been one of the leading actor-managers since 1896. The three most notable hits during his nine years at the Haymarket have all been successes across the Atlantic—"The Little Minister," "Under the Red Robe," and "The Second in Command."

The latter, one of John Drew's famous vehicles, will be in Mr. Maude's repertory,

which will also include three plays that have failed in America—"Beauty and the Barge," "Toddles," and "Tantalizing Tommy." He comes under a certainty of fifteen weeks, with a clause providing for a year's absence in case of a pronounced hit. I wonder he does not arrange to do "The Flag Lieutenant," which was one of his greatest triumphs at the London Playhouse, but which met prompt disapproval in New York because of inadequate casting.

The Playhouse, Mr. Maude's present home theater, has no pit, and is one of the prettiest auditoriums in the West End. He had an unlucky experience with it just as it was nearing completion. The train-shed of Charing Cross Station, which adjoins it, collapsed, and utterly destroyed the almost finished structure, necessitating a delay of a year in its inauguration.

Mr. Maude's wife, Winifred Emery, who formerly played with him at the Haymarket, remains behind to act in London. Their daughter Margery will be her father's leading woman in America.

There is less certainty about the coming of two other stars from across the seas. When Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, of His Majesty's Theater in London, was in New York last December, he announced his intention of bringing his company to the United States for a series of Shakespeare productions. I have no great expectation, however, that this idea will be carried out, although it is scarcely to be imagined that Sir Herbert plans to cast himself for any rôle in "Joseph and His Brethren," the autumn offering at his London house.

There is only a shadowy possibility, too, of our seeing again Mme. Simone, the French actress who has been playing in English for the past two seasons. Bernstein, however, has written her a new play, "The Secret," which would appear to be



KATHERINE GREY, TO APPEAR IN A NEW COMEDY DURING THE COMING SEASON

From a photograph by White, New York

more like his "Thief" in its acting possibilities than anything he has since turned out. It may be that this will tempt Mme. Simone to visit once more a country where

evil apparently from a sheer love of wrongdoing." The big scene shows her on her knees begging that her shame be kept from her husband. "The Secret" was first



ENID BELL, WITH NORMAN TREVOR AT THE LONDON SAVOY IN "A CARDINAL'S ROMANCE"

From a photograph by Foulsham & Banfield, London

her experiences have hitherto been none too pleasant.

"The Secret" is the play she did in London, last June, in the original French. Her character of *Gabrielle*, as a local report phrased it, is "an amazingly powerful study of a woman who, like *Iago*, does

produced at the Bouffes-Parisiens on the 22nd of March last.

Because I lead off the American stars with Maude Adams, it is not to be supposed that I mean to cling to the alphabetical order throughout, although it will be a simple matter to pass on from Miss

Adams to Miss Barrymore. As a matter of fact, Miss Adams needs no new play. Such a universal favorite as she could go on playing "What Every Woman Knows" and "Peter Pan" indefinitely, and I am sure her public would joyously acclaim a revival of "The Little Minister."

These three plays are all by Sir James Barrie—he was knighted by King George last May, or rather made a baronet, which carries the title on to his descendants. His latest full-length play, "The Legend of Leonora," has been mentioned in connection with Maude Adams, but as Mrs. Patrick Campbell is to create the leading rôle in London this autumn, I cannot imagine Miss Adams following her in it; so possibly the only new Barrie addition to her repertory will be "Rosalind," the fifty-minute playlet which created such a sensation when it was performed at the Duke of York's as one of three by eminent hands. It turned out the only one worth lighting up the house for.

This play has a curious history. Its heroine is an actress, and it was written by Barrie as a gift to Miss Adams, being timed to reach her—as it did—on the occasion of her single performance of *Rosalind* in "As You Like It," at Berkeley in the Greek Theater of the University of California. This was on June 6, 1910. Of course Miss Adams was delighted with the high compliment the eminent author had paid her,



QUEENIE VINCENT, IN THE MUSICAL SHOWS AT THE LONDON SHAFTESBURY

From a photograph by the Dover Street Studios, London



PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY, ELLEN TERRY'S NIECE, LEADING WOMAN WITH SIR HERBERT TREE AT HIS MAJESTY'S THEATER, IN LONDON

From a photograph by the Dover Street Studios, London

but at the time there was no opportunity of performing the piece. Then, when the three writers already mentioned turned out their offerings for the Duke of York's unique bill last winter, it chanced that both Pinero's and Barrie's each contained a comic ghost. In the emergency, Mr. Frohman appealed to Miss Adams for the loan of her "Rosalind," with the result recorded.

The novel "Tante," furnished the basis for the play that Haddon Chambers is preparing for Ethel Barrymore. It would be difficult to find two more sharply contrasting heroines than the leading feminine character in Mr. Chambers's new piece and the quiet young woman in his last previous work, "Passers-By." In "Tante" Miss Barrymore will be called on to enact a young woman to whom excitement is the very breath of life. Even calamities do not come amiss, so long as she is the center of a *contretemps* that does not do her personal injury. The nearest approach to such a rôle Miss Barrymore has had in the past was that of the prima donna in her first starring vehicle, "Captain Jinks," one of the most successful in her gallery of creations.

Tante is a musician, no longer young, and very difficult to live with. As long ago as last December Mr. Frohman's own press-sheet announced this play as being written for Miss Barrymore's use, but in June a London newspaper declared that the manager would produce the piece in America as soon as a suitable actress could be found for the leading part. I had thought this might mean that Miss Barrymore was to be co-starred with her uncle, John Drew, as the *Beatrice* to his *Benedick* in "Much Ado About Nothing," but latest advices assign the heroine to Laura Hope Crews and the *Hero* to Mary Boland. For at last Mr. Frohman's first star is to go back to Shakespeare, a line in which he distinguished himself under Augustin Daly twenty years ago.

Speaking of Daly, Arnold of the name may be seen in "General John Regan," the comedy that Charles Hawtrey has been doing in London with considerable success. It was taken off in June to permit of the production of "The Perfect Cure," by Stanley Houghton. This, however, lasted only four nights, after which "General John Regan" was restored to the bill. The author, who signs himself George A. Bir-

mingham, is a literary clergyman of the Episcopal Church in Ireland—the Rev. John Hannay, of Mayport, County Mayo. This is his first play, and I should say that it would suit Arnold Daly better than Hawtrey. And I can't see Charles Cherry in it at all; but Cherry's name is mentioned in connection with the hero as I correct these proofs.

Henrietta Crosman is having as much trouble as Grace George in securing a vehicle. Last year Miss George tried "Carnival," by the English writer, Compton McKenzie, for a short while on the road; then she shelved the piece, and returned to New York, still hoping for a novelty, but finally fell back on a revival of Sardou's "Divorçons." There was a rumor that Avery Hopwood had written her something, but it may have been only newspaper talk.

As to Miss Crosman, she is said to have spent Holy Week in reading twenty-three plays without finding one worth trying. If this sort of thing keeps up, she may revive standard comedies. Rather hard on the classics, in a way. They are seldom brought to light unless your star fails to discover a modern piece that appeals to him or her in its chief character.

I can easily imagine three people being nervous over "Indian Summer," the play that Augustus Thomas is writing for John Mason, these three being Mr. Thomas, Mr. Mason, and Charles Frohman, under whose auspices the thing is to be produced. To the best of my recollection, Mr. Frohman has never yet had a Thomas hit, while Mr. Mason has acted in two of his big successes, "The Witching Hour" and "As a Man Thinks," but under other management. Here's hoping that any hoodoo that may lurk in the year 1913 may counteract the other nixie.

As to Billie Burke's plans, I shall let her tell them herself. I was fortunate enough to have a little chat with this youngest of the Frohman stars during her holidays in London.

"Yes," she said, her eyes sparkling as they rested on the charming view of the Thames and the Embankment Gardens seen from her drawing-room windows at the Savoy, "I was delighted to have so fine a part as fell to me last winter in 'Mind the Paint.' You know that there wasn't much for one to take hold on in the kind of girls I had had to play for several seasons."

"But it is very difficult to find good plays just now," I reminded her.

"That's because we are groping after some new light," she replied. "One notices it in all the arts. In painting we have the experiments of the impressionist and the cubist; in music we have Debussy, and in drama plays like 'Hindle Wakes' and 'The Great Adventure'—character studies, not merely stories.

"Yes, I am to tour in 'The Amazons' for the first part of the season," she went on, but with so little enthusiasm that I could easily gather that the betrousered *Lady Thomasine* makes no great appeal to her sympathies. "In December," she continued, her face lighting up again, "I come into New York—I hope to the Empire, where I love to play—in 'The Land of Promise,' my new piece by Somerset Maugham. I am very fond of his work. You know I have already acted in a comedy of his—'Mrs. Dot.' That wasn't written for me, though. Indeed, a woman of quite another type—Marie Tempest—had created the part in London. But now I am to be the heroine the author had in his mind when he was writing, and I am looking forward to rehearsals with the keenest pleasure."

It's a capital name that Richard Harding Davis has hit on for the farce he has written to fit Willie Collier—"Who's Who." If the piece lives up to its title and to the reputations of the author and the star, there's a big success coming in the near future.

For Blanche Bates, Mr. Frohman has gone to England, and in Stanley Houghton's "The Younger Generation" will show us a play of middle-class life in Manchester, a bit less solemn than the same writer's "Hindle Wakes." The piece ran through last winter in London.

If Douglas Fairbanks does not change his mind again, as he did about appearing in a sketch this summer in London, he will probably be seen in Hugh Ford's dramatization of a story called "Cooper Hoyt, Incorporated." Laurette Taylor has in reserve "Barbarezza," which the hit of "Peg o' My Heart" will probably keep her from using for some time to come. Fannie Ward will try it again in a farce from the French called "Mme. la Presidente." So will Cyril Scott. "The Man Who At Last Found a Play," his vehicle might appropriately have been called. However, it is

not quite that, but "The Man Who Found a Way," by Jules Eckert Goodman, author of "Mother."

In this day of stars scarcely out of swaddling-clothes, it is refreshing to hear of one actor promoted to such prominence after fifty years on the stage. This is Willis P. Sweatnam, the black-faced porter of "Excuse Me" and *Sassafras Livingston* in "The County Chairman." He will be *Uncle Neb* in a comedy of that name to be presented by Henry W. Savage. His career dates from the age of seven, when he went on with the minstrels in Cincinnati.

SOME OF THE STARLESS PLAYS

As stars have appetites and must live, they naturally move early in the matter of arrangements for the coming season, and thus in turn induce managers to fashion their programs betimes. With starless plays, however, there is not the same reason for planning far in advance, and this year the powers that be in the realm of drama have been particularly slow in announcing their intentions.

For one thing, the American theatrical world is in a state of transition. The end of the war between the Shuberts and the Syndicate has put a new complexion upon booking arrangements; the big features that have come into the motion-picture field have promoted certain films to use in leading playhouses; and the shortage in good plays prompts the man behind the producing pocketbook to wait as long as possible in the hope of unearthing a "big find" at the last moment.

Winthrop Ames believes that he secured his bonanza early last spring in acquiring the American rights of Arnold Bennett's latest play, "The Great Adventure," whose London production I reviewed in the July issue. This attraction—a dramatization of the author's novel, "Buried Alive"—will open Mr. Ames's newest theater, the Gotham, in West Forty-Fifth Street, and Janet Beecher, lately *Empress Josephine* in "The Purple Road," and noted for her fine impersonation of the wife in "The Concert," will enact *Jane Cannot*, the leading woman's part. At this writing, early in July, "The Great Adventure" still remains the dominant dramatic attraction of London.

For his Little Theater, Mr. Ames announces another English importation, "Prunella; or, Love in a Garden," by Laurance Housman and Granville Bar-

ker. This was done in London some three years ago by Charles Frohman in the course of his ill-fated repertory scheme at the Duke of York's. Mr. Ames has also agreed to occupy the Comedy, opening it with "Her Own Money," by Mark Swan. The record of this house for the past two seasons, with "Buntz" and "Fanny's First Play" on its bills, will take some beating.

Speaking of "Buntz," its author, Graham Moffat, has written a brand-new comedy for William A. Brady's use and to fit Molly Pearson, the original *Buntz*. It is called "A Wee Bonnie Lassie," with one act laid in New York and the others near Edinburgh. I sincerely trust Mr. Moffat will be more successful with this new venture than he was with his "Scrape o' the Pen" last year.

I have small doubts as to the success of another in Mr. Brady's string—"Oh, I Say," a farce from the French of Henri Kéroul and Albert Barré. It is playing to heartily laughing audiences at the London Criterion, with James Welch as the distracted bridegroom who tries to keep his newly wedded wife from meeting his lately discarded actress friend. This sounds like the same old thing in Parisian complications, but a new pattern is worked into the scheme by causing the actress's maid to let her mistress's flat all unknowingly to the honeymoon couple. Given the unexpected return to town of the actress, and you have an imbroglio which, while neither literature nor drama, is swift farce.

A third of the Brady offerings—in conjunction with the Shuberts—is also an importation, a successor to the successful "Whip." For another big melodrama from Drury Lane, the American managers have not drawn on last winter's product, but on a piece produced several years back. "Cheer, Boys, Cheer," is the name of the spectacle by Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton underlined for mid-autumn at the Manhattan Opera House. There is no horse-racing this time, the nearest approach being a polo match at Hurlingham, while further excitement is provided by a battle scene in the South African War. There are also a gambling episode and a glimpse of Hyde Park made brilliant by the women's frocks, which, no doubt, will reflect the fashions of to-day rather than those in vogue when the piece was new.

Mr. Brady likewise stands sponsor for a

comedy which has won a Harvard prize and has already had a hundred-night run at the Castle Square Theater, Boston. It is called "Believe Me, Xantippe," and the author, John Frederick Ballard, is said to have acquired practical experience by engaging as a stage-hand at the Illinois Theater, Chicago.

At this writing we have little more than rumors as to David Belasco's plans. Mr. Belasco went abroad for the first time in several years this summer. The fact that his trip, which was made very quietly, included a visit to Paris, would seem to pre-empt that he may have in view a drama from the French. I happen to know that he has encountered great difficulty in finding a suitable vehicle for Frances Starr, and I believe that he has at last decided to write one for her himself. Gossip credits him with possessing a piece on prison reform by Roland B. Molineaux, who assuredly had first-hand opportunities to study his subject.

Charles Frohman appears to be very sanguine about the new theatrical year. Besides his star and musical attractions, he has asked Richard Harding Davis to write him a play for the Empire, and Lechmere Worrall is busy on a comedy adaptation from the French. Mr. Worrall is a young British dramatist whose biggest hit thus far has been "Ann," which ran for several months at the London Criterion last season. He went down to defeat in New York before that, by trying to fit a piece to Chevalier, the coster king, who should have stayed where he belongs—in the halls. Another item on the Frohman list is a dramatization of the Elizabeth Robins story, "My Little Sister."

One of the earliest productions may be already on view when these lines are read. Certainly "Potash and Perlmutter," the play form of Montague Glass's Jewish tales, has been long enough in reaching the stage after the first steps were taken toward placing them there. In fact, Mr. Glass told me more than two years ago that he had quite lost interest in the thing. I hear that Louise Dresser has been engaged by A. H. Woods as the leading woman.

Another book-play that has been a long time on the way from covers to footlights is "The Inner Shrine," which Channing Pollock dramatized three years since. A. G. Delamater now promises to put it forth in the near future.

I hesitate to print the announcement that Earl Derr Biggers's tale, "Seven Keys to Baldpate," is being made ready for the stage by George Cohan. The Cohan feet are particularly liable to chills in the passage from print to proscenium frame.

A HEAVY SEASON FOR LIGHT MUSIC

One sits appalled before the list of musical plays announced for the coming six months. Of course, not a tithe of them will get as far as production; but even to mention half the number in the space at my command would be in the nature of a mere catalogue of titles. So I must content myself with comment on a few, and if these chance to be among those which the managers finally decide not to present, I have already warned you that weather prognostication is sure-fire prophecy compared with theatrical announcements.

Messrs. McLellan and Ivan Caryll have struck the popular chord two seasons in succession with their "Pink Lady" and "Oh! Oh! Delphine," and they are now to give us "The Little Café," based on a French farce by Tristan Bernard. The fact that this failed in straight play form with Cyril Maude, in London, is no argument that with a musical dressing the result will be the same.

Undeterred, likewise, by the instant collapse of his "Eva," Klaw & Erlanger have contracted with Franz Lehár, the "Merry Widow" man, for his newest work, "The Ideal Wife." Great title this, in any case. We shall all want to see the librettist's conception of such a personage.

Speaking of widows, Channing Pollock and Rennold Wolf are to add grass to the red variety they have already given us, and Donald Brian, who is inseparably associated with the merry brand, will star in "The Marriage Market," about the London production of which I wrote in this department last month.

For Hattie Williams and Richard Carle, Charles Frohman imports "The Doll Girl," music by Leo Fall, of happy "Dollar Princess" memory. Another musical maiden he has under consideration is "The X-Ray Girl," the creation of Paul Rubens, who wrote "The Sunshine Girl" and "Miss Hook of Holland." The heroine is a French-American who possesses the ability to see through everybody, and I should not be surprised to find Marie Doro entrusted with the part here when she fin-

ishes with her rôle in the London production of "The Conspiracy."

A welcome departure from the usual line of musical comedy titles is "Who Shot the Governor?" a piece by Glen McDonough and Hugo Riesenfeld, based upon the German "Fool's Dance," by Birinski, and underlined by Klaw & Erlanger, with the possibility of Hazel Dawn, Alice Dovey, and Maclyn Arbuckle in the cast. Arbuckle is not the only actor in the legitimate to step over into the song circle, even though not called upon to warble. It is on the cards that George Fawcett will join Elizabeth Murray in "High Jinks," secured by Arthur Hammerstein from Otto Hauerbach and Rudolf Friml. The latter wrote the delightful music in "The Firefly."

"Mrs. Swift of New York" may be the new vehicle for Julian Eltinge, although he has had so many in contemplation that I make this statement with an unusually large grain of salt. Undismayed by the recent failure of plays dealing with the Romany folk, Henry W. Savage, after listening to the music on a gramophone, arranged to bring out "The Gipsy Chief," described as "the reigning operetta sensation of Vienna." There is a familiar ring to that phrase, isn't there? The Hungarian composer, Emmerich Kalman, wrote the score, but Mr. Savage evidently did not trust wholly to the disk-hearing, for he has since been to Austria. So if "The Gipsy Chief" fails to strut the boards you may lay the preliminary announcement to the deceptive nature of canned music after a four-thousand-mile journey.

The Shuberts, as usual, reserve their prospectus for very late publication, but I believe one of their offerings is to be "Princess Caprice," which they planned to do last year. This is the operetta by Leo Fall which ran in the summer of 1912 at the Shaftesbury, London — where "Oh! Oh! Delphine" scored a fair success.

In closing these comments on what the managers have said they expected to present during 1913-1914, I wish to emphasize the fact that many new names may be noted in the field of producers, during the early months of the season at any rate. Does this, contrasted with the comparatively few offerings planned by the experienced men, juggle an old adage into some such new form as this: "Angels rush in where others refuse to be fools"?

Matthew White, Jr.

FINANCIAL DEPARTMENT

A CHANGE IN FOREIGN TRADE

IT is peculiar of the present situation that general industry has been well maintained despite the highly unsatisfactory markets of the year. Not only has the trade reaction so confidently predicted six months ago failed to materialize, but some departments of commerce have actually established new records for activity and progress.

In nothing, perhaps, is this more strikingly illustrated than in the returns of the foreign trade of the United States for the fiscal year ending June 30, recently made public by the Department of Commerce and Labor at Washington. These figures show that the country has transacted the largest volume of international business in its entire history.

Within the interval under consideration, the commerce of the United States with other nations reached the impressive total of \$4,278,383,070, of which \$2,465,761,910 represented exports and \$1,812,621,160 imports. This represents an increase of \$421,795,727 over the previous high record, established in the fiscal year 1911-1912, when gross transactions footed up \$3,857,587,343. The volume of our foreign business now is almost double that of only a dozen years ago, and no signs of its halting are observable.

A striking feature of the government trade report is the disclosure of a radical, almost revolutionary, change in the character of our exports. For many years the greater portion of our foreign shipments was made up of foodstuffs and cotton, and the United States became known as the bread-basket of the world. Our exports of such commodities are still enormous, particularly of cotton; but the larger share of last year's business was made up of manufactures.

American industries are entering into the trade competition of the world with remarkable success. To the total exports of the twelvemonth finished goods and fabricated wares constituted \$1,437,465,-

910, while agricultural and raw products totaled \$1,028,296,000. Last year's shipments of manufactures exceeded the total of all our exports in 1904.

According to competent observers, two causes have operated to bring about the remarkable change in the American export business. The first is the practical exhaustion of the cheap or free and easily tillable farming land; the second is the formation of industrial and manufacturing companies with large enough capital to enable them to enter the foreign field.

After the occupation of the fertile prairies of the Mississippi and Missouri valleys was completed, some twenty years ago, there came a relative decrease in the production of foodstuffs and in agricultural exports. Homeseekers from the Old World began to turn from the harder toil of farming to find their living in the industrial cities of our Eastern and central territory, where the growth of manufacturing furnished them with the opportunity to sell their labor advantageously. Moreover, the greater conveniences of urban as against rural habitation appealed to the rising generation of country folk, and there has been a steady drift from the farm to the town.

The more rapid growth of city as against agricultural population has increased the domestic demand for foodstuffs and lessened the surplus for export; at the same time it has given us the products of manufacture for sale abroad. Other factors have played a part, no doubt, but the most potent influence in changing the character of American foreign commerce has been the shift of population from the farms to the cities.

The United States is not the only country that has experienced violent declines in security prices coincident with expanding and active commerce. The same phenomena are also typical of England and Germany, and to a lesser degree of France. Without burdening this article with "caravans of figures," as some one has termed government statistics, a passing reference to the

NOTE—All matter in this department was written before the end of July.

June statement of the British Board of Trade is not without interest.

The details of England's imports and exports for the first half of the calendar year complement our own trade statement. Great Britain is our best customer, taking more of our raw products than any other nation, together with a heavy percentage of our manufactured goods. In turn, America is the most important customer on England's books.

British imports during the first six months of the present calendar year reached the huge total of three hundred and eighty-three million pounds sterling, while her exports approximated two hundred and fifty-seven millions sterling. In round figures, imports increased twenty-five millions and exports thirty-two millions over the same interval in 1912. These impressive totals have never been equaled in the commercial annals of England; and Germany, too, has transacted this year the largest volume of foreign business in her history.

It seems anomalous that securities should have depreciated in every important financial center in the world in the face of indisputable evidence of prosperity among the leading nations. The condition is susceptible of a logical explanation, however, though this involves some slight modification in recently accepted theories. Heretofore the fall in prices has been attributed chiefly to excessive new financing. It would appear, however, that the demands of business are a contributory influence.

If the merchant and manufacturer is employing his money profitably in his own business, it cannot be available for the banker's use. If financial groups have issued too much inflated paper, then new financing must halt, and the prices of securities will fall. There is not enough available capital in the world to permit further heavy flotations coincident with great business activity. It is far better, however, that speculative securities should decline than that industry should experience any severe reaction.

A MOMENTOUS BANKING ACT

BANKING and currency legislation, to which President Wilson and his party pledged themselves before election, has assumed definite form in the Federal Reserve Act which is now before Congress.

The proposed legislation contemplates the establishment of twelve or fifteen Federal reserve banks in as many districts of the United States. In some respects it is patterned after the much-discussed Aldrich plan, but in other particulars the two schemes differ widely. Certain points of divergence, and specially one which vests the control of the proposed system in a politically appointed central board located in Washington, have called forth general protests from mercantile and banking interests.

Whether the Federal Reserve Act will become a law in its present form is an open question. It undoubtedly possesses good features, such as the segregation of a large portion of banking reserves, now held in cities like New York and Chicago, in the regional reserve institutions. It provides a method for rediscounting commercial paper by a process far less cumbersome than that proposed under the Aldrich bill; and it recognizes such paper, combined with a certain percentage of gold, as forming a proper basis for bank-note circulation. These features are in line with the best banking practise, and commend themselves to financial experts.

Realizing the dangers which lurk in the "panic-breeding" national banking system, and appreciating the great necessity for monetary reform, we are loath to criticize the Federal Reserve Act. With all its defects, it marks a genuine effort to establish a currency system commensurate with modern business needs, and to prevent any future suspension of specie payments, such as took place in the panics of 1873, 1884, 1893, and 1907.

The act has been modified in numerous important particulars from the plan as originally submitted, and it may undergo further amendment. Certain details do not appear to have been thoroughly thought out. In particular, no provision is made for future government financing, and the disposition of the outstanding two-per-cent bonds, now pledged as security for national bank-notes, is unsatisfactory.

No feature of the new bill has given national bankers greater concern than the plan of dealing with the present bond-secured circulation. The provision has been modified five times without reaching a wholly satisfactory solution; and the result has been a depreciation of several points in government securities. The consolidated two-per-cents of 1930 and the two

issues of two-per-cent Panama Canal loans have declined to about 96, selling below par for the first time in their history.

To perfect the organization of a Federal reserve bank, every national bank within a given district is required to subscribe to capital stock to the extent of twenty per cent of its own unimpaired capital. Of this amount ten per cent is to be paid in immediately, the other ten per cent remaining outstanding as a contingent liability, subject to call. National banking institutions have no option in the matter, for the bill provides for their dissolution if they fail to subscribe to the stock of the regional reserve institution within one year. They may, as the only alternative, surrender their national charters and become State banks or trust companies—a course that many of them will probably adopt.

At present there are in the United States 7,173 national banks having a total capitalization of \$1,056,919,792. The enforced investment of ten per cent of this fund, an amount in excess of one hundred millions of dollars, in the stock of the regional reserve banks, and the creation of a contingent liability for a like amount in addition, may have a decided influence on commercial and financial affairs.

The same is true of the new reserve requirements. Total individual deposits in the national banks of the United States are \$5,953,461,551. Within sixty days of the passage of the bill, all national banks must deposit with the regional reserve institutions three per cent of their deposits, to provide a reserve for the regional banks; and within fourteen months they must increase the amount to five per cent. This calls for \$178,603,846 in the first instance, and for \$297,673,077 later on. The figure will be still further augmented in the course of time, for it is the intention of the framers of the bill to divert the larger part of country bank reserves, which now find lodgment in large cities, to the regional banks in their home communities.

Political control of the Federal reserve banks is the feature to which financiers offer the greatest objection. This is true both of the regional institutions and of the central board of control. Each regional bank will have nine directors. The subscribing banks, which supply all the capital, and are limited to a return of five per cent on their money, are to elect three of the nine; three others are to be chosen by the

banks from among representative citizens within the district; and three—one of whom shall be the manager—are to be named by the politically appointed board of control.

The Federal Reserve Board, at the head of the whole system, is entirely political. It is made up of the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Comptroller of the Currency, and four others appointed by the President, at least one of whom, as a concession to finance, "shall be a person experienced in banking."

No central bank in the world ever possessed such authority as that vested by the act in the Federal Reserve Board. Among the powers criticized as being entirely too autocratic and sweeping to be entrusted to a political body are the following:

To require, or on application to permit, a Federal reserve bank to rediscount the paper of any other Federal reserve bank.

To suspend for a period not exceeding thirty days any and every reserve requirement specified in this act, and to renew such suspension for periods not to exceed fifteen days.

To supervise and regulate the issue of Treasury notes to Federal reserve banks, and the retirement of the notes.

National bankers who have announced their intention of surrendering their Federal charters and converting their institutions into State banks or trust companies, if the Federal Reserve Act becomes a law, predicate their contemplated action on the following grounds—that though forced to invest heavily in the regional reserve banks, they have virtually no voice in the administration of the institution, or in the investment of their own funds; and that the regional banks themselves are subject to the domination and possible dictation of the Federal Reserve Board.

The latter may order one institution to assume heavy obligations. It may weaken the reserve position of another. It may prescribe such rules and taxes as it elects for the issue and retirement of Federal Treasury notes—a new circulating medium provided for in the scheme. The delicate fabric of credit was never so completely under the influence of government as is possible under the new bill.

The outstanding interest-bearing debt of the United States amounts to \$965,706,610,

of which \$730,882,130 is made up of the consolidated loan of 1930 and the Panama Canal issues of 1936 and 1938, bearing only two-per-cent interest. This rate is so low that the chief value of a two-per-cent government bond rests in its privilege to secure circulation and deposits of public money. Of the outstanding national bank-notes, amounting to \$740,529,250 on July 1, no less than \$686,039,000 were secured by the two-per-cent bonds. How vitally the entire credit of the country is wrapped up in the Federal Reserve Act may be inferred from the fact that the measure as originally promulgated contemplated the substitution of the Federal Treasury note for the national bank-note, thus releasing the huge mass of bonds underlying national bank circulation.

No provision was made in the original draft, however, for the conversion or refunding of any government twos except those pledged for circulating notes. The measure prohibited the reissue of national bank circulation, if once retired; and by that process its volume would steadily decrease. A certain amount of the two-percents might be refunded annually into three-percents carrying no circulation privilege, the conversion to be completed in twenty years. Holders of the remaining \$44,000,000 two-percents pledged as security for public deposits, or held as investments, for which no provision was made, realized that if the measure became a law they would have no market in which they could sell their bonds without serious concessions in price. Under existing conditions in the market for investment capital, the bonds would probably command no more than 70 to 75, while those subject to conversion into three-percents, without the circulation privilege, might find a level around 80 or 85, after the change.

Certain amendments have been made in the provisions relative to government bonds. Instead of a compulsory refunding of one-twentieth of the outstanding two-percents into threes annually, their conversion was made permissive during twenty years, the bonds retaining their circulation privilege in the mean while, and circulating notes may be reissued. No provision was made, however, for the \$44,000,000 bonds not under circulation; refunding at the unsatisfactory rate of three per cent was retained, and many large holders insisted that the amendments did not alter the situation.

In consequence, some of them offered their bonds for sale; and as the numerous uncertainties concerning the fate of the measure restrained confident buying by national banks, all government issues declined sharply, the two-percents in particular selling down to about 95. This creates the peculiar situation of national bank-notes passing current at a higher valuation than the market price of the government bonds underlying them as security.

The fall in government bond prices led to the serious allegation by Mr. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury, late in July, that influential New York banks had entered into a conspiracy to depress these securities in order to defeat the passage of the currency bill. Since they are the largest holders of the bonds and the chief sufferers by their decline, it is difficult to see how this charge can be sustained, particularly in view of the good and sufficient reasons for the sale of the bonds.

It is many years since a United States government bond has sold under par, and the decline in the two-percents below that figure brings a serious problem directly home to the community. These bonds are a stumbling-block in the way of true currency reform. The amendment continuing their circulation privilege for twenty years has wrought a material change in the new currency measure. Instead of taking the place of national bank circulation as a permanent issue, the Federal Treasury reserve note—which, by the way, is to be issued against the assets and gold of reserve banks, not of the Treasury—becomes little more than emergency circulation.

It would seem as if the gradual redemption of the two-percents at par offered the only real solution of eliminating bond-secured circulation without injustice to the banks.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the situation was not created by the present political administration or by the National Reserve Act. It arises from the fictitious credit given to the government by the Refunding Act of 1900. The measure extended the national debt on a false interest basis of two per cent for a period of thirty years.

The Refunding Act of 1900 was an inflation measure pure and simple. It permitted the national banks to increase their outstanding circulation from ninety per cent to the full par value of the underlying

bonds without putting up an additional dollar of security. By reducing the permissible limit of capitalization of a national bank to twenty-five thousand dollars, it brought thousands of little banks into existence. Thus a market was created for the two-per-cents at an artificial price, for use as a basis for note circulation.

The misleading interest basis completely changed the character of government bonds. The rate being too low to make them desirable as an investment, the national banks became almost the sole buyers of the bonds, and they are now almost the only holders of the Federal debt.

Under the new bill the general Treasury fund heretofore deposited in banks against bonds as security will be placed with the

regional reserve institutions. With the prospect of a retirement of national bank-notes government bonds will not appeal to bankers as in the past, and the market for them is likely to contract.

This, of course, has a direct bearing on future government financing, and it is difficult to see how further borrowing can be arranged except through bonds carrying higher interest than at present. Any such issue, however, would doubtless still further depress the two-per-cents and three-per-cents, and might unsettle the entire finances of the government.

The Federal Reserve Act cannot prove wholly satisfactory unless amended to deal with the outstanding national debt in an intelligent manner.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

TO REVOLUTIONIZE CIVILIZATION

I enclose you a paper sent to me because my name was found in "Who's Who in America." Is this a square deal?

M. A. W., Gloucester, Mass.

The paper forwarded by our correspondent is a copy of the so-called "special 'Who's Who in America' issue" of the *Lomax Herald*. This four-page sheet devotes practically the whole of its printed space to what it justly describes as a "most remarkable enterprise."

Such towns as New York and Chicago have hitherto loomed large on the map of the United States, but it would appear that they are shortly to be surpassed in glory by Lomax, Illinois. This community "out on the eastern banks of the Mississippi" is heralded as "the first great preplanned city in the world" and "the first step of a great reform movement that will remove the national menace of our cities, wipe out the slums, and ultimately revolutionize our civilization."

At the present time the future metropolis and model city would seem to consist largely of a "deed and declaration of trust" which sets forth the plans of the promoter of the project and pledges all the assets of the "movement" for its realization. We apologize for the use of the term "promoter," for the *Lomax Herald* assures us that this "is not a money-making scheme." Nevertheless, it appears that the investor's money will not be refused if he offers it. Indeed, the dollar-mark figures frequently in the literature of this great project for reforming mankind. We read, for instance, that at a certain date "our \$2,000 lots will be increased in price to \$2,200; our \$1,600 lots will be raised to \$1,750; and our \$1,200 lots to \$1,300." Elsewhere we are informed that "the minimum prices on

one hundred and fifty thousand lots" will create a "town building-fund" of no less than \$500,000,000. That will indeed be a nice little sum to play with.

A cynical reader of the *Herald* might say that all this picturesque verbiage about vast funds and momentous movements is mere decoration, as it were, of the main purpose of the Lomax literature, which is to sell certain pieces of land at what appears to be comparatively high figures. If a prospective buyer has seen the land, and has decided that it is worth the price asked for it, we have nothing to say against his making a purchase; but we cannot recommend him to pay more than its actual value in the hope that he will be helping to "benefit all mankind" and "revolutionize our civilization."

THE CHILDS COMPANY

Can you advise me regarding a stock I have under consideration—that of the Childs Company? Does the company own all the restaurants operated as "Childs's"? Are its methods proper and on a sound basis? Would you deem the preferred stock a good investment for a person of small means? Is the company likely to continue doing business in the future as in the past?

G. W. G., Hopewell Junction, N. Y.

The Childs Company operates the lunch-rooms known as "Childs's" in New York and several other cities. We do not know of any other concern using the name. Food is the first of all human necessities, and the business of furnishing cheap meals in large towns is both a staple and a stable one. The Childs Company has an excellent reputation as a sound and well-managed concern, and it is earning good profits. No one can foretell the future, but we know of no special reason why this company's success should not con-

tinue. Its chief danger, we should say, is that of increasing competition.

The Childs preferred stock, though not listed on the exchanges, is a substantial investment security, paying seven-per-cent cumulative dividends. We should not recommend an industrial stock, even of this good class, as the most suitable for a dependent person, or for a small savings fund, but it may well be considered by an investor who has other sources of income.

UNITED STATES CASHIER COMPANY

Can you tell me anything about the United States Cashier Company, of Portland, Oregon? They exhibit samples of ingenious machines for change-making and the like. Their agent selling stock in this part of the country is working on two of my relatives, who can ill afford to lose money in any questionable scheme. I tell them that any good proposition is snapped up by the "people on the inside," while a plausible machine promotion may be a scheme of the "inside" to make money faster selling stock than building machines.

My relatives will not listen to me, but I believe that anything you printed would be read with respect.

H. L. G., Los Angeles, Cal.

The United States Cashier Company does not figure in our financial manuals, but we have had several inquiries about it from places where its shares are apparently being offered for sale, and we have seen some of its stock-selling literature. Its circulars contain much matter of the sort put out by so many get-rich-quick promotions. They repeat the familiar reference to the fabulous profits said to have been secured by "ground floor" investors in the Bell Telephone and similar concerns. Of course, while they mention a dozen successful and profitable inventions, they say nothing whatever of the many thousands of promotions based on patents which have resulted in nothing but loss and disappointment.

We have consistently recommended our readers to exercise great caution in regard to promotions that seek to raise capital by selling stock through highly colored circulars and prospectuses promising phenomenal profits from some patented device. In such cases the promoters assure you that they can sell their machine or implement in enormous quantities and at a very large profit if only you will let them have the comparatively trifling sum needed to build their factory or perfect their equipment. Let us take the most favorable view of their proposition. Let us suppose that their device is meritorious enough to meet present and prospective competition, that their intentions are strictly honest, and that the management of their enterprise is in every respect efficient and capable. Even so, only the future can determine the outcome of their venture.

In the formative stage, when still raising its capital, the promotion is necessarily an uncertainty—in other words, a speculation; and

small investors should not be lured into the speculative field, with its few successes and its almost innumerable failures. They should put their money where it is safe, and where they can get it again when they want it.

While our Los Angeles correspondent shows a commendable appreciation of the value of caution in making an investment, his general financial ideas seem to be somewhat less sound. Apparently he thinks—as do many other people—that there exists in this country an organization or group of "insiders" which goes about seizing all the most attractive opportunities of profit and generally devouring the substance of the people. Furthermore, he appears to believe that these wicked monopolists vary their tactics by promoting bogus enterprises and selling worthless stock.

We have not space to deal with this theory here and now, beyond saying that while not entirely without foundation, it is a highly imaginative and much distorted version of existing conditions. Particularly fanciful is it to identify the interests vaguely known as "Wall Street" with the irresponsible promoters of wildcat prospectus companies.

THE CHICAGO GREAT WESTERN

Can you give me an idea as to the present standing of Chicago Great Western stock? I notice that it has dropped to about 11. At this low figure do you consider it a good buy, inasmuch as J. P. Morgan is back of it?

H. H. S., Omaha, Neb.

A great many people seem to think that because a stock is low-priced it must be cheap. As a matter of fact, more often than not, the opposite is the case.

The fact that a railway was reorganized under the auspices of a prominent house is no guarantee of dividends on its stock. None have been paid by the Chicago Great Western since the concern was reconstructed four years ago, and there is no early prospect of any distribution to its shareholders. We do not recommend our readers to put their money into non-dividend-paying securities, and cannot consider this stock a good buy even at its present low quotation.

ANOTHER NON-DIVIDEND-PAYER

Kindly advise me what dividend the Missouri Pacific has been paying for the last few years, and whether you consider the stock a good investment.

L. M., Chicago.

The Missouri Pacific suspended dividends in 1908, the road being at that time in poor physical and financial condition. It has made no payment to its stockholders since that date, and we should not recommend its shares for an investment. Indeed, we should regard a purchase of them as a highly speculative operation, with little prospect of satisfactory result.

THE WASP

A NOVEL—COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

BY THEODORE GOODRIDGE ROBERTS

AUTHOR OF "JESS OF THE RIVER," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. M. ASHE

Ye who have seen the blush and bloom,
The pearly sheen and opal gleam
At sunrise, in a wide sea-room,
Of a new landfall sweet as dream;

Ye who have seen the corpse-lights slide
On swaying spars; ye who have known
The scent of spices on the tide,
And roses, from the horizon blown;

And ye who dream these things—for you
I cruise these summer isles again,
And drive my adventurous children through
The straits of Youth and Joy and Pain.

An honest tale for honest hearts;
Good men and bad to do and dare,
And lovers blithe to play their parts—
Lay on to my salt sailor fare!

JAMES BURNHAM had been in London a matter of three weeks when, one October morning in the year 1698, he stepped into the doorway of a Cheapside shop to let a company of jailbirds from Newgate go by with their guards.

Captain Sterling, a wealthy planter of Nevis in the West Indies, had purchased two hundred malefactors from the historic prison and was now marching them to Billingsgate, off which lay the brig Good Cheer, all ready for her freight of hopeless humanity and her long voyage to the south and west.

The jailbirds walked in pairs, ironed at wrists and ankles. Many were young, many were in middle life, and only a few were old—for the gentleman from Nevis

had made a good bargain with the authorities of the jail. Some of the poor devils wept openly, some cursed and raved, and others walked with closed eyes and stricken faces.

The escort of this pitiful and foul company was a rabble. All of its members were armed and many of them were intoxicated. It was a sight to wrench a man's heart; but Burnham looked out at it coldly from the doorway of the little shop. His heart was of no more value than a lump of stone, so far as emotions were concerned. It could be heated, but it could not be melted.

He looked on at the cruellest sight to be seen that day in all England with a cool and ironic glance. Yet his interest was somewhat quickened upon beholding a known face in that pitiful procession. It was a thin face, but still a square one—the face of John Trimmer, the son of the tailor of Wantage.

The black and tortured eyes of the jailbird met the pale-gray eyes of the gentleman in the doorway.

"A merry voyage to you, John!" cried Burnham, with a wave of the hand.

"And the same merry voyage to you, Master James Burnham!" the malefactor cried back.

The procession passed on amid groans, curses, jeers, and the clank of iron. At Billingsgate these children of despair, these damned shapes and stricken souls, were put into barges and ferried out to the waiting brig. They were lowered to the ballast in

the brig's hold, in the stench of the foul bilge-water. An hour later the Good Cheer—with all the elements of hell, save fire, in her hold—went down the river with the ebb tide.

James Burnham returned to his lodgings in Swan Alley, St. Paul's Churchyard, in a black mood. That ghastly procession of thieves, housebreakers, masterless men, and footpads on their way to the plantations in the islands, and John Trimmer's face in the midst of it, had set his mind along a line of dark and uncomfortable reflections.

His own fortunes were at a dangerous ebb, and he was without hope of an immediate turn of the tide. Already he had been forced to several questionable and dangerous expedients for the replenishing of his pockets, and already he felt the eyes of suspicion upon him. His fingers were not clever enough for the improper manipulation of the dice and cards, it would seem; so what was left to him but the road?

He doubted if his grieved and indignant father would give him another chance. And his town companions, brawlers and reckless gamblers though they were, had eased away from him during the past two days. Even Kitty had deserted him—Kitty Trimmer, of Wantage, whom he had clothed in rich silks and made merry with rare wines. Kitty had left him as a rat leaves a doomed ship.

James Burnham was the third of four brothers, the sons of Sir Walter Burnham, of Burnham, near Wantage in Berkshire. Sir Walter was a hard man and a hard rider, upright in his saddle and in his dealings with his fellows, high-tempered and unforgiving and full of peculiar whims.

One of his whims—and it took on the dignity of a passion with him—was to put his mark on every article in his possession. His mark was the heraldic device of the Burnhams of Burnham; or, in some cases, only a part of that device. Large and highly valued pieces of plate were engraved with the paternal arms, topped by the helmet, the wreath, and the crest, and underpinned by that brief but honorable and poetic statement, "*Expectans equito.*"

On smaller pieces the crest only was cut. On his house of Burnham and on a dozen farmhouses and a score of cottages the four-barred hurdle, a device from his arms, was cut deep in the stone. But he drove his passion for putting his mark on things

even farther than this; and the crest of the Burnhams of Burnham, a conventional griffin, was tattooed just beneath the left shoulder-blade of each of his four sons and of his one daughter.

All the sons of Sir Walter Burnham promised well and rode straight except James. James possessed the courage of his race and its dangerous temper, but he lacked the nice sense of honor that had ballasted the men of his family through stormy centuries.

He went to school and felled one of his masters with a book; he went up to Oxford, with a view to studying for the church, and laid a proctor low with a cudgel; he had a tender affair with the daughter of the tailor of Wantage, and first brought it to the ears of the public by discharging a pistol, without warning, at another of the lady's admirers—an admirer who unfortunately happened to be a magistrate and his own uncle on his mother's side.

He fled to London after this performance, but on his way was held up by a man in a mask. Thanks to his courage and swiftness, he overcame the gentleman of the road, removed the mask, and discovered John Trimmer, of Wantage, the brother of his light-o'-love and son of the honest breeches-maker. He sat on the highwayman's heaving chest and laughed ironically. John's saddle-bags were fairly well lined with the golden tolls of the road; and in return for half of that golden lining James agreed to consider the incident closed.

They shook hands on the agreement; then John Trimmer went his way and James Burnham his. So James arrived in London with full pockets, and soon sent to Wantage for Kitty Trimmer.

Kitty came, and for a week the game went merrily; gold was multiplied, silks were bought, and the lodgings in Swan Alley rang with mirth provoked by sound vintages. Kitty became a toast with a certain set of hell-rakes and its following of harmless young fools.

Then Burnham's luck changed suddenly, and he was forced to make use of loaded dice with some of the young fools. He did it clumsily, and the plucked fools took offense. On the heels of this, a more skillful hell-rake played the same game on him, plucking him to the hide; and on the day following that dismal night the youngest of the fools, an ensign by the name of Stanton, took Kitty away from him.

This last was the shrewdest cut of all, though he would not admit it even to himself. He was fond of the girl, though he had not entertained any delusions about her even before her desertion.

James Burnham sat for a long time in grim thought. Pictures of his past and the picture of the daunting procession he had seen that very morning trailed through his mind. How long, he wondered, before he, too, would be on his way to the plantations—or the gallows?

The sight of John Trimmer in that gang had touched him keenly—not with pity for John, but with consciousness of the peril of his own position. He sat in a padded armchair, limp, with his laced hat still on his head. Something like defeat twisted his lips; but a menacing light shone in his pale eyes.

The room had not been touched in two nights and a day, for even the maid servant had deserted him. Blobs of wax and black wicks topped the candlesticks. Cards and dice lay on the table. Kitty's fan, a painted thing that he had given her, lay on the floor. Its frail sticks of fragrant wood had been crushed by a boot-heel. The heavy furnishings looked tawdry in the sunlight.

James sat up suddenly and smiled around him with a sinister grimace.

"To perdition with them all, and may the evil one get his twist on the heartless little wench!" he cried.

A tall bottle of green glass, half full of French brandy, stood among the cards on the table. He extended his right hand slowly, grasped the bottle, drew it to him, set it to his lips, and drained it. He flung the bottle violently across the room with an oath; it splintered against the wall and fell to the carpet in a dozen tinkling fragments. Then he settled back in his chair and glowered straight before him.

Footsteps sounded on the stairs, ascending briskly. James did not change his position, though his shoulders seemed to take on alert lines and his eyes turned toward the door. The door was flung open and a large man with a gray mustache and brick-red face looked into the room with a pair of eyes as quick and bright as blue lightning.

"So here you are, Master James!" he said coolly. "Lord, an' here's a hogsty for your father's son!" he added in a voice of frank disgust. "High noon, 'pon my soul, an' the cards still on the table an' the

bottles on the floor! Ye'd look for more order an' decency in a carters' tavern—aye, and find it."

Burnham smiled sardonically; but a flicker of hope shot up in his insolent eyes. This big man on the threshold was William Stow, Sir Walter Burnham's steward. He had been born on Burnham land, had served in the army in his youth, and since then had served the Burnhams for thirty years. He was now Sir Walter's right-hand man.

"Good morning to you, William," said James. "Welcome to the hogsty! Come in and sit down and give me the news."

Stow entered, closed the door behind him, and sat down in a chair close to the untidy table. He gazed curiously and scornfully around him as he placed his hat and elaborate walking-cane on the carpet beside his large feet.

He was booted and spurred. He was dressed in his best and looked like a prosperous country freeholder of the class just verging into the small gentry from the substantial yeomanry. He showed his native honesty and dignity in face and figure. Having surveyed the room, his bright blue glance returned to Burnham's watchful and inscrutable face.

"Ye're to leave England, Master James—aye, and alone," he said. "In money and shame ye've cost yer father more than ye give any promise of ever being worth, though ye'd live a thousand years. Aye, ye're a disgrace to the family and the name, Master James!"

"Try to be civil, my good fellow," replied Burnham quietly.

"Civility be blistered!" retorted the other. "My heart burns at the thought of ye—of yer low deeds. To fire a pistol at an unarmed man! That was never the Burnham way. And all about a tailor's wench. And to turn highwayman atop of that! Lord save us!"

"Highwayman?" queried James, with a shadow in his pale eyes.

"Ye need not deny it," said Stow. "The ring ye sold to the Jew has been recovered by Sir Bertram Wise. The knight of Hanneley has sharp eyes and a sharp nose, but he's in no mind to see the son of yer father kicking his heels in the wind. So ye're to go out of England, Master James, never to return. Ye're to go to Jamaica."

Burnham's courage flinched. He remembered the ring which he had taken

from John Trimmer and sold to the Jew in Cheapside. Was he to be transported to those islands of despair? He turned a colorless face and a sickly grin upon the stalwart William Stow.

"It's what ye deserve, and no more," said Stow, unmoved. "It's what would happen to ye were ye my son—which Heaven forbid! To the plantations ye'd go, like any common thief or slit-purse. Aye, ye would—an' rot of fever under the whips o' the drivers!"

Hope awoke again in Burnham's breast, for it was evident from Stow's words and manner that his fate was not to be so severe as the steward would like to see it. A little color returned to his cheeks and his insolent eyes danced. He laughed sharply.

"Bravely spoken!" he sneered. "And now will you be so good as to deliver me your master's message? I'll swear he didn't send you up to London to air your private opinions of morality."

"The Lass o' London, Captain Hobkirk, sails to-morrow," replied William Stow. "I've been aboard her already and done yer father's business with Master Hobkirk. And now I'll take ye aboard, as soon as we buy yer outfit for the voyage. Here's twenty guineas for that same outfit, and a letter of instructions to ye from Sir Walter. But hark ye, the wench is not to go with ye. Mark that, Master James!"

"To thunder with the wench!" exclaimed Burnham with a twisted mouth and a cross-glint of his pale eyes, as if he were trying to look at his own nose. "She has flown the cage already, my good Stow. But will you condescend to tell me something more of my fate? I am bound for Jamaica, you say. What am I to do in Jamaica? Manufacture rum? Govern the island? Name it."

"When ye go ashore in Kingston, ye and the shipmaster will report to Mr. Angus McLatchy, sugar exporter, and the shipmaster will then put five hundred guineas into yer hands," answered Stow. "Five hundred guineas—and ye'll never see another shilling of yer poor father's money. Ye'll associate in trade with the worthy McLatchy, and multiply those guineas, or ye'll squander the money with the swine and the husks and rot in the mire—it's all one to us. But if ever ye come home to England, rich or poor, ye'll be clapped into prison and soon set on another voyage without a box of gold!"

This was better than James had expected—much better than he had even dreamed. He had angered and disgraced his father, and was astonished and delighted to find him so generous. The mistake of his family in believing that he had already taken toll on the king's highway did not trouble him in the least, considering that it was the inspiration of the five hundred guineas.

As for the warning never to return to England—well, that did not trouble him, either. He was shrewd enough to suspect that if he should ever return with plenty of money and a respectable reputation he would be entirely welcome.

"Where is the money?" he asked.

William Stow smiled calmly and knowingly at that.

Captain Hobkirk proved to be a companionable person, ignorant of book learning and the usages of polite society, but full of a merry humor. He treated James Burnham with an easy mixture of comradeship and respect; for to him Burnham was nothing worse than a wild young blood who, for family reasons, was to continue and conclude the seeding of his crop of wild grain far away from home. He had heard of such young bloods before.

James saw the shipmaster's point of view, and humored it. He kept his black temper well in hand and pretended a harmless but rollicking nature. He even pretended to be a good deal of a fool. He sang, he laughed more and more heartily than was his wont; he seemed to be easily overcome by wine, and he kept the devil out of his eyes. He was already learning the virtue of discretion and dissembling.

The long voyage wore along comfortably enough, with a moderate amount of fair winds and no rough weather. Contentment dwelt in the forecabin and good-fellowship in the cabin. James Burnham hoodwinked the shipmaster, the mates, and the crew, but he did not hoodwink himself. On the contrary, these weeks of peace and goodwill acted like a tonic to his true nature. He began to long for vice and the excitements of tavern brawls and midnight dangers. He longed for a fight. He saw that he was not born to peace under any conditions.

The ship was within a day of her destination when the sudden, clear dawn discovered another vessel to windward. The stranger was a topsail schooner. Hobkirk regarded her apprehensively through a long

telescope, then passed the glass to the mate. Mr. Boyle looked and wagged his head.

Another head-sail was run up. The brass gun on the forecastle-head was cleared of its jacket and run aft. The boatswain served out cutlasses to all hands.

"What is she?" asked Burnham, feeling a pleasant glow in his breast.

"A bloody pirate, I'll take my oath," returned Hobkirk. "Him they call Major Deck, maybe, or Duval the Frenchman. They both sail schooners for speed. It's a disgrace to England that every honest trader must run for his life and cargo every v'yage!"

II

BURNHAM's pale eyes shone and glinted. His hands trembled on the taffrail and an artery pulsed visibly in his neck.

"You have a strong crew and a stout ship," he said. "Why not wait for them and give them a drubbing?"

"Wait for them?" repeated the shipmaster in a horrified voice. "Heaven help you, sir, but you don't know their kidney! A strong crew, say you? If we have forty seamen and the after-guard, that schooner carries one hundred and fifty devils—devils, sir!"

"But we have the taller ship," persisted Burnham, "and pistols in plenty. We could shoot down upon her decks; we could cut them down as they came over the side, one by one."

"Aye; and ye'd soon be whistling through a slit gizzard for your five hundred guineas!" retorted Hobkirk dryly.

He glanced at his passenger, then stared at him with round eyes. Burnham's gaze was fixed upon the schooner astern in a hard, dancing, cross-glinting glare. His white teeth gleamed between his twisted lips. His cheeks shone white. The veins stood out on his forehead and the artery pulsed in his neck. He breathed heavily.

"Lord, sir!" exclaimed the shipmaster. "Ye look as if ye'd jump the taffrail to be at their throats."

James Burnham swallowed hard, laughed, and turned his back on the schooner. His eyelids fluttered swiftly.

"I enjoy a fight—none better," he said. "That is the first pirate ship I've ever seen, and it excited me for a moment."

"Excited you!" said the mariner. "Yes, but I'll swear it didn't fright ye. Bless my soul, sir, but ye looked as wicked as

any red pirate yerself for a minute. A fighter, as I see—and I didn't suspect it before. Ye should be fightin' for yer king, that ye should. Ye'll be wasted as a merchant, sir."

Burnham laughed again and laid a hand on Hobkirk's shoulder.

"Oh, I'm no fire-eater, my friend," he said lightly; "but I have heard stories of those gentry astern that set my teeth on edge to be at them at the first sight of them. The seas should be cleaned of them. What are the king's ships doing?"

"A very noble sentiment, sir, and one as does credit to yer heart," said the shipmaster; "but the king's ships be all on the hunt after the French ships, and so it falls out that these spawn o' the evil one be masters o' the sea."

"Will she overhaul us, think you?" asked Burnham.

"Not unless she follows us clear into Kingston Harbor—if this wind holds. And it'll hold, ye may swear to that. We'll slip her this v'yage. She don't sail her old clip. Foul, like as not, an' needs to be hove up an' scrope, Heaven be praised!"

Burnham turned again and looked hungrily and viciously at the vessel far astern; then he went below and waited for his breakfast in a fretful temper. He had hoped for a fight; and he cursed the schooner for her slowness.

Three hours later the pirate vessel shifted her helm, hopeless of coming up with her intended prey. The ship's company cheered at that; the cutlasses and pistols were returned to the lazaretto beneath the captain's cabin, and the brass gun was pushed forward to its usual place in the bows.

Burnham continued to stand and glower after the schooner until Mr. Boyle, the mate, came to his elbow.

"We be properly in luck," he said. "If Hellfire Hicks had sighted us a couple of hours afore he did, we'd be dead men now, every mother's son of us!"

He was a big man with plump red cheeks and a very fine opinion of himself.

"Dead men!" sneered Burnham. "I suppose you mean you would have died of fright if the schooner had come within gunshot of you!"

He choked down the meaningless rage that had been brewing in him all these peaceful and uneventful days, turned on his heel, and went below to the main cabin.

If ever a man was spoiling for a fight it was James Burnham; and yet he did not want to shatter his reputation aboard the *Lass o' London* as a man of peace at this last hour of the voyage.

Boyle entered the cabin twenty seconds later.

"Now look ye here, my fine cock, what was this ye said about dying of fright?" he asked in a throaty and truculent whisper. "Henry Boyle takes no such talk as that from no man, be he common tar or lord's son!"

Burnham, who was seated on a locker, did not look up, but the muscles of his shoulders twitched slightly. The big mate leaned far across the table with his big hands fisted upon it.

"Ye don't look so keen for a fight yerself, just now," he sneered. "Be ye returnin' thanks to yer Maker for yer safe delivery from the pirates?"

Burnham sprang without a sound, vaulted the table, gripped the mate by the windpipe, and drove him against the larboard bulkhead.

And so Captain Hobkirk found them half a minute later. Burnham loosened his grip, and the mate slid limply to the deck. Burnham smiled at the shipmaster.

"The fellow insulted me," he explained coolly. "The lout does not comprehend the nice feelings of a man of breeding."

Hobkirk dragged the half-choked and utterly cowed mate to his feet.

"Ye be too ready to pick a quarrel with yer betters, my lad," he said. "I trust this here will larn ye a lesson. A man who raises the devil in a peaceable gentleman like Mr. Burnham ought to be clapped into irons."

The long voyage terminated in an hour, and James Burnham parted from Hobkirk and the crew on the best of terms. Mr. Boyle did not appear to wish him God-speed.

He found Angus McLatchy to be a Scot of the most respectable type, long-faced, bleak-browed, dry of hand, everlastingly turning from his ledger to his Bible and back again, and finding comfort and food for thought in both.

Burnham spent two nights and two days under the worthy merchant's roof. Both men conducted themselves coolly, watchfully, politely; but neither warmed to the other. McLatchy felt a sharp distrust of Burnham's eyes; and Burnham found

nothing that appealed to him in McLatchy's nature, sugar, or Bible.

He envied the merchant the story told by the ledger, however. He looked inward and saw that his temper would not stand a great deal of McLatchy and his ways, and that the affair might terminate in a sudden and violent death.

He was beginning to know himself for what he really was. He saw a picture of himself braining the Scot with the weighty ledger. So, at the end of that brief period of two nights and two days, the decision was mutual that James Burnham, Esq., was not designed by nature for the sugar-exporting trade. James left the merchant's establishment with all his guineas intact and soon fell among gentlemen who had no dealings with either Bibles or ledgers.

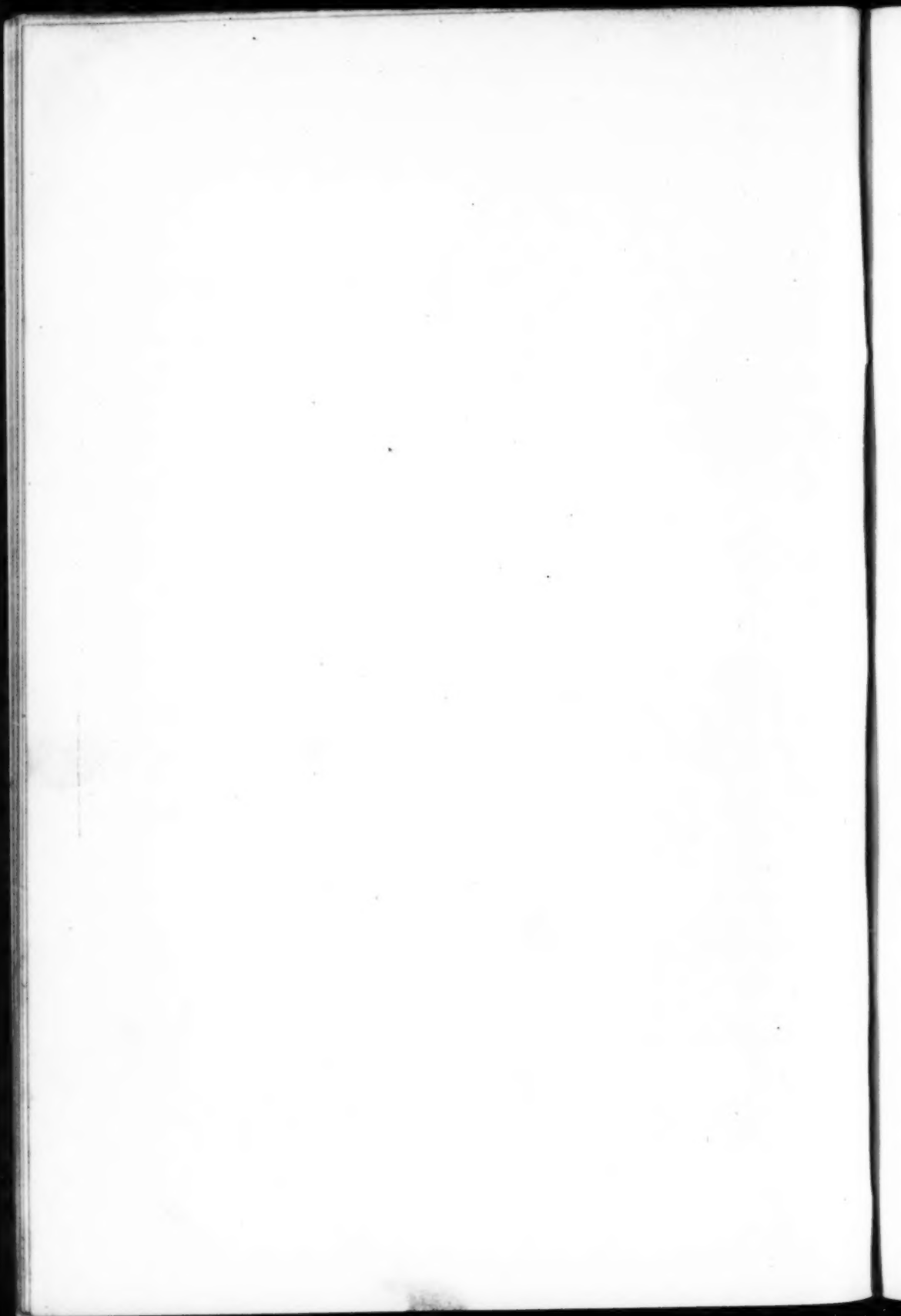
Mr. Peter Queery, one of Burnham's new companions, was a man of about forty years of age, with a hard head and the most confiding manners in the world. He was a person of importance and substance—by his own telling, at least. His dress was always as accurate and rich as the climate permitted with any degree of comfort; his words were invariably polite and well-chosen; and he shone in that company of roistering blades—they were broken gentlemen, for the most part—with an air of kindly superiority.

From the very first his manner toward James Burnham was markedly considerate and intimate. This was subtly flattering, as if he saw and acknowledged the difference between Burnham and himself and their jovial but worthless companions. And yet there was nothing pedantic about him. He enjoyed the society of these reckless, good-natured, useless fellows, he said—and one instantly knew, without being told in so many words, that more respectable circles were open to him.

There is no need to picture you this society or to describe its entertainments. James lost a little money at play—he would have lost a great deal but for his menacing eye—and heard many strange stories. He heard anecdotes of the pirates, privateers, and other doubtful characters of that time and those seas—of Major Deck, who had been a respectable planter in Barbados twelve months ago; of Duval, who was a Canadian gentleman and very polite in his methods of taking life and property; of Hellfire Hicks, who had once been a shopkeeper in one of the islands.



BURNHAM SEIZED THE YOUNG WOMAN IN HIS ARMS AND DASHED ASHORE



James was interested, and asked many questions.

"It's the way to make money," said one of the company. "It's a profession and a science. It calls for brains and courage. They all have their agents everywhere. Hicks keeps his books like any honest merchant, I've been told. Major Deck runs his business as a company, with a secretary, a treasurer, and goodness only knows what else. His wife drove him to it, they say, with her tantrums and her flirtations—and a fine, high-headed, swishing creature she is, too! A cousin of my own, by the way. Duval's methods are not so modern. He touches nothing but British shipping; and he has been known to square up to more than one sloop-of-war and fight for the glory of it. A very gentlemanly occupation, I assure you!"

"But there's hanging at the end of it," said Peter Queery.

"Not if you retire before you are caught," said another.

Every one had an opinion to advance on the subject; and as a number of the gentlemen were well along in their cups, much was said that was not exactly to the point. But Burnham gave attention to everything. He was thirsty for information.

"Ten to one there's an agent of Major Deck's at this very table," remarked a thin young man with a yellow face. "And one of Hellfire Hicks's, too, like as not. Very respectable-appearing men, these pirates' agents are. There was one who lived a whole year with the governor of the Bermudas as a tutor. He got away one night with Dame Murdock's pearls and diamonds, and they couldn't find hair nor hide of him; but when Captain Blue's brig was cornered among the Bahamas, three months later, by the sloop-of-war Fox, there was the tutor on the brig's poop, his sash full of pistols and a cutlas in his hand, the most desperate pirate of them all. He despatched five men with his own hand before he was cut down. A notorious pirate he was, and Blue's trusty—but he'd been born the son of a bishop and educated for holy orders."

James Burnham spent a month in Kingston, all the time in questionable society. His luck was good, and he paid his way with his winnings at dice and cards. Only on two occasions did any of his companions attempt to cheat him at play. On both occasions he proved himself a dangerous per-

son to trifle with. His white rage struck terror to the hearts of the most daring of the company; and during the rest of his stay in Kingston a tremor of apprehension went through the nerves of his companions whenever his pale eyes hardened and began to glint crosswise, as if he were trying to examine the tip of his own nose.

At the end of the month Peter Queery suggested to James that they were both wasting their time in Kingston.

"Come home with me," he said; and he told Burnham, at considerable length, all about his fine place in the island of Nevis.

He had a command of language, and painted the joys of a planter's life to a wish. He admitted frankly that he liked James—that he felt a warmth of the heart toward him as toward a younger brother. This being the case, he was willing to take James into partnership with him. He was unmarried and had no near relatives.

Burnham entertained no intention of devoting his future to the cultivation of cane, but he was anxious to see something of the other islands before investing his modest capital. If Queery was fool enough to pay his expenses, so much the better. They left Kingston in a shabby, stubby brigantine—Burnham and Queery and Burnham's box of guineas. They sailed at an early hour of the morning, and they sat late at their wine that night at the little round table in the cabin, with the master of the brigantine to keep them company, pledging each other's health and talking most amiably.

Queery laid a hand frequently on Burnham's shoulder.

"You know my place in Nevis," he would say to the master. "Well, I'll neglect it no longer. I've found a friend in this young gentleman—aye, and an heir, like as not. When I like a man, I like him without reservations. That's me! You know my little place?"

"I knows it, sir," the shipmaster would reply. "The finest estate in that island, ye may lay to that, sir!"

At midnight Queery brewed a rum punch of great potency. James Burnham awoke at noon of the next day with a splitting head, a thick tongue, and a wavering, fainting stomach, and found himself drifting alone in an open boat. His dazed and aching mind was not able to comprehend the situation immediately.

"Poisoned!" he muttered at last.

"Drugged! Robbed! Cast off—adrift in an open boat!"

There were oars, a square of sail-cloth, and a breaker of water in the boat. Burnham spread the piece of sail across the oars and lay down in the patch of shade, too sick to so much as curse Peter Queery.

The little boat rode the moderate seas gallantly, smoothly. A snow-white gull appeared, with red eyes and a red beak and wings as sharp and clean as curved knife-blades, and hung motionless high above the boat, preening the spotless feathers on its breast, riding the invisible tides of air with no flicker of effort. At last it slid downward, circled on arched pinions, hung low above the boat's stern for a few seconds and stared at the man beneath the awning with round, crimson eyes.

The man saw it and cursed feebly. The bird veered with a tremble of its wing-tips, circled and slanted upward, and returned to its old position and the preening of its spotless and untroubled breast.

In a running blue slope astern that was alive with cross-fires of green and gold, a long and slender shadow wavered, grew in distinctness, and suddenly a black fin rode the sloping seas like a little sail. The fin circled the lazily riding boat, then sank gently and vanished for a time. The long shadow wavered like a ghost of darkness under the boat's counter.

The sun went down at last, and just before the sudden white stars were lit above the purpling sea, James Burnham awoke again from his heavy sleep and crawled slowly backward from beneath the square of sail-cloth.

He stood up in the stern of the boat and scanned the fading horizon. His face was haggard from the ravages of the drug, his hard eyes smoldered, his dry lips were slanted in a grimace of rage and horror. The horizon was empty. He lowered his glance and beheld, dim against the darkling sea, that convoying fin.

There was no food in the boat. Burnham drank deep from the oaken breaker, then lay flat on his back and stared up at the stars until sleep returned to him. In his sleep he dreamed that he had Peter Queery's windpipe beneath his fingers; and he made the most of his opportunity, you may be sure. But the dream was vastly confused and delayed in its action, for dregs of the drugged punch still moved sluggishly in his blood.

Now he and Peter were in his London lodgings, flat on the carpet, and as his fingers gripped Peter's throat he heard the laughter of Kitty Trimmer. And now they were on the brick floor of a wine-shop in Kingston, and Peter's face was like a purple bladder. Now he was in the open boat, his fingers still pinched deep in Queery's throat—and Queery was dead.

He laughed in that lifeless, hideous mask, then loosed his cramped fingers and raised his own face to the sky. The stars were gone, and the whole arc of heaven was awash and pulsing with fearful, bright lights. Burnham rose to his feet and shouted to the flaming sky. And all around him the sea was like a sea of fire; and clean-cut against the red and gold and orange of the waves cruised the black fin.

He stooped and grasped the body of the dead man with both hands. His strength was as a giant's strength; and he lifted the limp clay and flung it far out into the flaming sea. The black fin veered away from the splash. The body sank, then returned slowly to the surface and floated upon that flaring field, dark, shapeless, and inertly sinister.

It drifted in upon the boat. It bumped against the boat's side, ponderously, persistently. Burnham cursed it and pushed it off with an oar. It sank beneath the flaming sea at the thrust; it surged to the surface again, and again drifted boatward, wide-eyed, purple-faced, and thumped dully along the boat's starboard side.

Burnham cursed it again, and again attacked it with the oar; but it seemed to avoid the long blade, sluggishly but certainly. It struck upon the boat's thin planking with knee and hand and head. Burnham screamed curses at it—and the sound of his own screams awakened him.

He awoke with the horror of the dream still upon him. He lay on his back in the bottom of the boat. The stars had paled and the sky was like a pearl-gray shell. The white gull drifted into his line of vision on motionless wings, hung directly over him, and looked down with its red eyes. Then he remembered where he was, how he had come there, and what his fate was likely to be.

He was hungry, for he had been two nights and a day without food. He was thirsty. He was about to sit up and take the water-breaker in his hands when the sound that had haunted his dream came to

his ears—the sound of something bumping softly along the side of the boat.

He scrambled to his knees with a gasp of terror, then remembered that the dead man had been only a thing of his dreaming. He looked straight down over the starboard gunwale and saw the long, vague shape of the shark at rest close beside him, not more than a foot beneath the brightening surface of the sea. His heart shook, for here was a sinister omen indeed; but with sudden fury he raised an oar spear-wise and plunged it straight down at the great fish. The blade struck, and the shark darted away, with a swirl of water that rocked the boat, into the watery gloom beyond.

James Burnham gazed slowly around him. The sun was not yet above the horizon, but the clear flame of it shone like a tide of molten glass between sea and sky. Above this clearest radiance lay a band of tenderest pink. The sea to the eastward sparkled and glowed with silver and gold and rose.

To the southeast, and not more than three miles away, the swelling sails of a little brig blushed like the petals of a pink rose. Her hull, transfigured by the morning gleam, transfused with the shimmering of wave and air, glowed upon the seas like an opal.

The whole scene was a picture fit for a child's wonder-book; and it was hard to believe that this same sky had glowered wide with naked heat but a few short hours before, that the fanged shark swam and waited under that marvelous glimmer and gleam, that coffee was even now being brewed in the galley of that fairy bark for the consumption of hairy-handed, foul-mouthed fellows in tarry breeks.

It was hard to believe; but the castaway knew that it was so. Best of all, to him, was the thought of the coffee and stale bread aboard the brig. He stood at gaze until his eyes convinced him that the vessel was heading his way. Then he turned, took up the little oaken breaker, pulled the plug with his teeth, and drank deep.

All the east now was awash with gold and rose. Burnham stood on a thwart and flapped the square of canvas several times at arm's length above his head. He sat down, manned the oars, and pulled in the brig's direction with all his strength. His strokes soon lagged and faltered, for he was weak with hunger.

The sun cleared the horizon, the sails of the brig lost their tints of rose and the hull its opalescent quality. The heavens shone blue from sea-rim to sea-rim.

James Burnham was taken aboard the brig, which proved to be an honest vessel from the New England town of Boston, bound for Barbados. The castaway sank upon the deck. There piping hot coffee and coarse sea fare from the galley were brought to him.

The master of the brig, an elderly, lean person with a goatish beard and a long, shaven upper lip, watched him eat and drink with calculating regard, and then questioned him. Burnham told the true story of his adventure with Peter Queery.

"Yer tale sounds likely enough, young man," said the shipmaster in a curiously high, whining voice. "The devilment that goes on up an' down this Atlantic sea, from Acadia in the north to Trinidad in the south, is an offense to heaven an' a stench i' the nostrils o' the Almighty. But yer life has been spared to 'e, young man, an' ye'd do well to dedicate it to the Lord. I kin see by the cast o' yer countenance an' the slant o' yer eye that ye've bin bred in ungodliness, roistering, an' high-bellied living; and yet yer tainted life was spared to 'e. Better men, godly men, true sarvants o' the Lord, hev not bin so fortunate. There was Cap'n Moses Smith, my own blood-brother, a constant reader an' digester o' the Good Book, set sail a year back come January, from Jamaica, with a cargo o' red rum an' black negroes, an' hain't never bin heerd of nor seen since. Overhauled an' scuttled by the pirates he was, ye kin lay to it. Deck or Hicks or the Frenchman got him, hull, crew, an' cargo, an' his own saintly life into the bargain. Ye're lucky, my young friend, to be a settin' here now with yer worthless life still aglow in yer belly!"

Throughout this lengthy homily James Burnham had sprawled on the deck, with his shoulders to the bulwarks, and regarded the pious shipmaster with dancing eyes and a crooked smile.

"Thank you," he said. "What suggestions have you to make as to the best way for me to begin to dedicate my life to the Lord?"

Mr. Smith pulled his goatish beard and reflected. He spat tobacco-juice into the scuppers.

"Ye'd best set to work a showin' yer

gratitude to the human instrument o' yer release from death by thirst an' starvation," he said. "Two days out o' Boston we lost a poor sinner overboard. In that I see the hand o' Providence, young man. Ye kin take his berth an' help us work the brig down to Barbados."

A shadow as of speculation crossed Mr. Burnham's glinting gaze. He contemplated the shipmaster with an open sneer of suspicion, for he had already gathered enough knowledge of these western waters to lead him to suspect that a penniless and friendless white man here, be he gentle or simple, need look for neither charity nor justice.

In his mind's eye he saw himself being sold by the shipmaster to some unconcerned planter in Barbados. So he stared sneeringly and questioningly at Mr. Smith until the glance of that worthy wavered and fell.

"Barbados will suit me to a wish," he said, "for I doubt not that my friend, Mr. Angus McLatchy, of Kingston, has an agent or correspondent in that island."

Smith fingered his beard and treated the castaway to a sharp but fleeting glance.

"Like enough," he said. "Like enough; but what proof can ye show that same agent or correspondent that ye're a friend o' Mr. Angus McLatchy? I'm thinkin', young man, he'll want more than yer word for it."

"I have the proof," replied James Burnham easily; but in his heart he knew that the mark on his shoulder would count for nothing among strangers.

During the remaining hours of that day Burnham was permitted to idle about the brig's main-deck and sit or lie in such patches of shade as happened to take his fancy. When he was thirsty he went to the open water-butt which lay lashed to the bulwarks, amidships on the starboard side, and drank his fill. At meal-times, receiving no invitation to the cabin, he went to the galley and ate whatever coarse fare was passed out to him by the cook.

At such times he exchanged a few words with two or three of the members of the crew. He asked no questions, however, and none was asked of him. The rough and dejected-looking fellows eyed him curiously, even suspiciously.

III

WHEN night fell James Burnham felt sufficiently revived in body and spirit to assert himself. He ascended the short ladder which led to the circumscribed poop-

deck and accosted the shipmaster, who was lounging against the larboard rail with a pipe between his teeth.

"I find you remiss in hospitality, and must ask you for tobacco, a pipe in which to smoke it, and some definite information as to the whereabouts of my berth," he said coolly.

A string of rattling oaths flew from the shipmaster, and he sprang from the support of the low rail straight at Burnham's throat. The castaway stepped nimbly aside and shot out his right foot, and the New Englander stumbled across the narrow deck and came in sharp contact with the starboard rail.

He turned, however, quick as a cat, and sprang again at the friendless castaway. Again Burnham stepped aside a fraction of a second before the instant of collision, and again he used his artful foot to advantage. This time Smith measured his full length upon the planking. Burnham laughed dangerously, and decided in a flash that he would meet the next attack with his fist instead of his foot.

Smith scrambled up with a splutter of oaths, and at that moment Mr. Winch, the mate, who had left the cabin by way of the after-companion, smote Burnham on the back of the head with a belaying-pin.

When Burnham recovered consciousness it was to find himself in the brig's fore-castle, alone, ironed, and sprawled in a corner. His head, neck, and shoulders ached dully, and the back of his skull was as tender as a boil. His stomach was heavy and his mouth was dry.

The stagnant air of the fore-castle stank of dead tobacco-smoke, of bilge, of soiled garments and humanity. This dismal apartment was below the level of the deck and slam in the brig's bows, and such light and ventilation as it could boast were supplied by one small hatch. Now the sunshine flooded straight down the open hatch.

Burnham stared fixedly at the bolt of sunshine and remembered everything that had happened to him up to the time of the blow on the head. He surmised, correctly enough, that the blow had been delivered by one of the brig's officers.

He looked around for some means of quenching his thirst, but could see nothing in the fore-castle that promised relief. He turned his attention to his irons. He was shackled at the ankles only, and was not chained to the deck or frame of the brig.

He crawled to the foot of the ladder which led up to the open hatch and was about to ascend it when a shadow fell upon the rounds above him. He looked up, at the same time shrinking aside from the foot of the ladder, and saw a small, ragged figure slip over the coaming of the hatch and commence a slow and halting descent.

The visitor was Henry Todd, the ship's boy. Burnham had noticed him about the deck the day before—a skulking, frightened lad of fifteen or sixteen years, thin and colorless, and bruised about the face and naked shins. He had been interested in this forlorn creature, but had felt no pity. Suffering never inspired pity in James Burnham's breast. He had seen the lad flinch at a word from the black cook, cringe at a glance from the shipmaster, and start in terror at a curse from one of the mates; and so, in a spirit of contrariness, he had spoken cheerily to the terrified youngster.

Todd turned at the foot of the ladder, stared at Burnham for a second or two without a sound, then thrust a bottle into his hands. Next moment he was gone up the ladder and through the hatch.

"It would seem that I have a friend aboard this accursed tub," said Burnham. "A whipped dog of a friend, to be sure—but of some use, perhaps. It is wonderful what a kind word will do! What a blessing it is to be possessed with a tender and genial disposition!"

He sneered, removed the cork from the bottle, and sniffed at the neck. Then he raised the bottle and took a few drops cautiously on his tongue. It was a weak but refreshing mixture of rum and water.

His mouth and throat were dry, and his tongue was like leather. He tilted the bottle again and drank deep. He hid the precious bottle in a nook beside the heel of the bowsprit and returned to the corner in which he had found himself upon first recovering consciousness. He sprawled limply, closed his aching eyes, and thought hard in spite of the throbbing of his head.

A second visitor came to the suffocating fore-castle an hour later, and this was the shipmaster himself.

"So there ye lay, ye mutinous dog!" said the New Englander.

Burnham opened one eye languidly and groaned.

"How d'ye fancy yer berth?" queried the other, grinning dryly.

Burnham closed his eye and sprawled more limply than before. The shipmaster stirred him briskly with the toe of his boot, but failed to excite any response. He went to the foot of the ladder and bawled for Mr. Winch, the first mate. Winch looked through the hatch and was told to fetch down a bottle of liquor. He soon arrived with a bottle of brandy. He, too, stirred the limp form of Burnham with an inquiring toe.

"Leave the dog lay," he suggested. "He's purty nigh gone, anyhow."

"Fetch him round," said the shipmaster. "Put a gill or two o' that there liquor into him. He ain't worth a penny dead, afloat, or ashore; but if we land him alive an' in good heart he's worth thirty guineas out o' any planter's pocket."

"If we kin make one o' these here pirate captains out o' him, we'll git the reward from the governor, an' see him hanged into the bargain!"

"Ye're a deep one," said Winch, with admiration in his voice.

"An' how d'ye know he ain't a pirate?" replied Smith. "Looks like one, don't he? Picked up adrift in a open boat, wasn't he—an' ain't that what all these here pirate crews does to their captains when they want'er git quit o' them?"

"Ye got a figgerhead on ye, an' no mistake," responded the mate. "An' jist which one o' these here pirates will ye make o' him? He don't talk like a Frenchy, and Major Deck's a fat man, so I've bin told by them as have saw him."

"This is Hellfire Hicks," said the other promptly. "There's a reward o' two hundred pounds for him alive an' one hundred dead."

So brandy was forced generously between Burnham's teeth. Later he was fed with cabin fare. He had the stifling fore-castle to himself, for the crew had deserted it for the deck the moment the brig had entered the sultry latitudes.

Young Henry Todd brought him his food. The poor lad was a sight to soften a heart of iron; but James Burnham felt nothing but a scornful interest in him.

"If they don't hang ye," whispered the boy, "will ye git me a berth aboard a pirate ship? I git starved here, an' I git kicked. Let me be a pirate, sir, so's some day I kin lay this old devil's tub aboard an' see the cap'n an' Winch an' the cook walk the plank an' sink into the everlastin' "

sea! I'll help ye git away, Cap'n Hicks, sir. When we git nigh some land I'll victual a boat."

Burnham eyed him with a slanting, quizzical glance.

"So you would ship with a pirate, would you, my lad?" he said.

Todd assured him that he would, and gladly, though his parents had been honest folk and he had been brought up to read in the Bible every day. He would carry rum for any pirate afloat, he said, and clean their knives and load their pistols and swab up the bloody decks—anything, in fact, rather than continue to serve in the brig *Virtue*, with Captain Smith, Mr. Winch, and Sam, the black cook.

Two days later Henry Todd brought word to Burnham that the green hills of St. Kitts were in sight, and that the master expected to make the little island of Nevis some time during the following day.

"And where is it they intend to sell my neck for a reward?" asked Burnham.

"In Nevis," replied the boy; "to the governor of Nevis. An' if they can't make a pirate of ye, they'll sell ye to a planter."

"In that case we had better try to get ashore in St. Kitts, though I don't know if it is held by the French or the English just now. Do your best about the boat, lad, and give me a call when it is ready. Water, biscuits, a sail, and oars we must have, and if you can get hold of a musket or a brace of pistols, with powder and ball, so much the better."

The night fell dark, with clouds between the sea and the stars. It was long after midnight when Todd returned to the sweltering forecabin and crept to Burnham's side.

"All's ready," he whispered, "an' everythin's black as pitch. The boat's over the starboard side, amidships. Follow me, cap'n. Lay a hand on my shirt. Not a sound, for the love o' Heaven!"

They went up the ladder as soundless as ghosts, the boy in the lead. Truly the night was as black as pitch. Nothing was to be seen but the glimmering and vanishing of the phosphorescent seas overside and the red glow of a lamp aft at the binnacle. Clear of the forecabin hatch, Burnham laid his left hand on the lad's thin shoulder. In his right hand he held a heavy glass bottle by the neck.

They moved along slowly, step for step, noiseless in their naked feet, avoiding

sleeping men asprawl on the deck underfoot and sleeping men in hammocks slung beneath the life-boats overhead. Burnham turned his head once and saw the red spark of the lookout's pipe. They reached the starboard bulwarks and moved cautiously aft until Henry Todd's groping hand encountered the rope by which the boat was made fast.

"Here it is," he whispered, with a sob of relief in his voice.

At the same moment some one grunted at their very feet; some one scrambled to his legs, grumbling heavily, and touched Burnham's breast with a fumbling hand.

The blood went through Burnham's veins like spurting flame. He raised his left hand from the shoulder of the terrified boy and thrust it out gently, palm to the front. It came into contact with a bearded face. So he judged the exact position of the sleepy sailor's head. He swung the bottle and brought it down. It splintered, and the mariner sank to the deck with a faint sigh.

Naked feet pattered on the deck.

"Over you go!" whispered Burnham into the boy's ear.

Todd slid over the broad rail and went down the rope like a monkey. Burnham followed him quicker than it can be told, cast off the painter, snatched up an oar, and pushed away from the brig's side.

A voice hailed them. Burnham stumbled over the crouching lad, cursed him, found a second oar, and commenced pulling desperately away into the dark. Todd lay whimpering in the bottom of the boat between the thwart.

A light flared upon the bulwarks, throwing blood-red stains upon the sides of the little waves. Burnham silenced the lad with an oath. In the sanguinary illumination of the torch the two in the boat saw faces and shoulders lining the brig's side, but the light did not extend to the boat.

A musket was fired blindly. Burnham pulled several more strong strokes, then rested on his oars.

"Did you put any sort of firearms aboard?" he asked.

For answer the lad Todd thrust a musket into his hands and whispered to him that it was loaded. Burnham obtained the powder-flask and primed the pan. He drew the oars inboard, brought the musket to his shoulder, and fired deliberately at the core of torchlight on the brig's rail.

The light fell, and a scream rang across the rocking water. Burnham laughed guardedly, laid the weapon aside, and fell to rowing again. Ten minutes later he stepped the mast and set the little sail.

When dawn broke James Burnham beheld a green island lying within a distance of three miles to starboard, and more distant islands like cloudy pearls upon the brightening sea. The brig was nowhere in sight, and for this he thanked his stars.

He awoke Henry Todd, gave him the tiller for a little while, and employed his brief leisure in eating ship's biscuit and drinking stale water. Refreshed, he took the tiller again and let the lad eat and drink.

The island developed before them momentarily. The boy gazed eagerly forward at the climbing forests of green, at the low white surf riding in to the lilac sands, at the slender coconut-trees between the sea and the forests. He turned and gazed at Burnham with awe and admiration in his doglike eyes. There was a fine color in his wasted cheeks.

"Praise be to Heaven we're clear o' the brig *Virtue!*" he cried. "An' ye'll let me be a pirate with ye, sir? Ye give me yer word on it, cap'n. I got ye the boat, sir, an' never a hitch."

"What's all this talk about a pirate, you fool?" exclaimed the man, bending a terrific glance upon poor Todd. "I am no more a pirate than you are. My name is Burnham, James Burnham."

"Yes, sir," whined the lad, cringing.

They beached the boat and went ashore to spy out the country. Todd recognized nothing that he saw, for, though he had sailed two voyages to the West Indies, he had never had so much as an hour of shore-leave on any island.

Burnham was at his wit's end for a plan of campaign. He devoted an hour to a cautious inspection of his immediate surroundings. He knew nothing of his whereabouts and could only suppose that he was somewhere on the windward coast of St. Kitts. He was without money. His garb was of the scantiest, for on the night of the robbery he had sat up to the bowl of punch in nothing more than shirt, breeches, silk stockings, and shoes, for comfort's sake. His stockings and buckled shoes had been taken from him before he had been set adrift. Now his shirt of fine linen was grievously torn and soiled, and his breeches

had suffered from the dust and splinters of the brig's forecastle.

His lip, chin, and cheeks, which he had kept smooth as glass under civilized conditions, were now stubbly with a growth of several days. He fingered this growth discontentedly as he crossed the beach. At the edge of the whitewood grove he turned to Henry Todd.

"Have you a knife," he asked, "a sharp one?"

The boy shrank away from him, with terror in his humble eyes.

Burnham laughed.

"You poor fool!" he exclaimed. "Do you think I want to cut your throat? Perhaps you still think I am Hellfire Hicks. I have told you that my name is James Burnham. I am James Burnham, an unfortunate gentleman, and the son of a baronet. Now, then, have you a knife?"

Todd produced a large case-knife from a pocket of his canvas trousers. Holding it in his hand, he eyed Burnham timidly.

"If ye ain't a pirate," he whined, "what's to become o' me? What will I do for a berth? An' how'll I ever settle my score with Cap'n Smith an' Mr. Winch?"

Burnham laughed softly, and his dangerous eyes twinkled quite kindly. Circumstances were making something of an actor of him.

"If we ever get out of this corner, you'll never lack for a berth," he replied. "And now we'll breakfast again under these trees. Give me the knife and fetch up the best of the provisions. We can't be many miles from a house or plantation of some sort, or more than two days' journey from a port, at the worst."

"I stole this here knife from Mr. Winch," said the boy, passing it over.

Among the provisions which the lad carried up from the boat to the grove was a little crock of butter. After the second breakfast Burnham smeared some of this butter over his face and set to shaving himself with Mr. Winch's big knife. The knife was a fine piece of cutlery, with an edge like a razor's, and Burnham made a successful job of the operation. He had a deal of trouble in removing the butter, however, and was forced to scrub his face a dozen times with sea-water and sand.

By this time the sun was high and hot. The breeze from the open sea had scarce strength enough to win across the sands to the shade at the edge of the grove of white-

wood trees. Yellowish-gray crabs scuttled about on all sides among the gray roots of the grove. Burnham sat with the open case-knife in his hand, deep in grim meditation. Henry Todd lay full length on the sand and fell asleep.

From where Burnham sat in the shade he had a clear view of the gently curving beach for several hundred yards to right and left. He raised his eyes every now and again and scanned the glaring sea in front and the beach on either hand with a baffled, desperate glance.

A figure appeared around the point on Burnham's right and approached wearily and unsteadily. As it drew nearer he saw that it was a woman.

IV

THE stranger was white and young. Burnham's keen eyes told him so while she was yet a long way off. She was hatless, and her brown hair was tumbled about her drooping shoulders.

She was dressed in white, with a long skirt, and in one gloved hand she carried a wisp of a whip. She walked as if the sands dragged backward at her heels; the watcher saw that she was booted, and caught the glint of sunlight on her spurs.

Just as Burnham rose to meet her she reeled, fell, and lay motionless on the sand.

"Here's a guide for me, as I live!" exclaimed Burnham.

He left the shade of the grove and went swiftly along the beach to the prostrate woman. The hot sand scorched the soles of his naked feet.

She lay face downward, and he stooped and laid a hand on one of her slender shoulders. She did not move, and so he knew that she had swooned. He saw that one side of her white skirt was soiled with red earth, and guessed that she had met with an accident while riding. The handle of her little whip was of solid gold; therefore she must be a person of considerable importance in the island. His face cleared and his eyes brightened with satisfaction.

He knelt, raised her limp form gently with his right arm across her breast, and turned her so that he could see her face. He saw that she was young and attractive, though of a startling pallor.

Her eyes were closed, and she seemed not to breathe at all. A thin trail of blood moved slowly upon her white forehead from a small, bruised cut.

Burnham pressed a hand against her left side and felt the faint stirring of her heart. He was mightily relieved at that, but for his own sake rather than for the lady's. He lifted her bodily and carried her to his resting-place in the edge of the whitewood grove, where Henry Todd continued to slumber heavily.

Burnham lowered the unconscious young woman to the sand and bathed her face and hands with the water from the brig. He had no spirits to administer, but she opened her eyes at last and looked up at him with vague inquiry in her gaze.

Her eyes were as deep and blue as the sea, with lights of amber and dark green in their cool depths. He returned her unwavering gaze steadily and cheerily. She sighed, and her lids fluttered and closed.

"Turk threw me," she whispered. "Where am I—and who are you?"

"You are safe," he answered gently. "I found you fallen on the beach, unconscious, but a few minutes ago. I am a stranger in St. Kitts; but if you can tell me where you live I shall give myself the honor of taking you to your home."

She opened her eyes again for a second. "This is not St. Kitts," she said. "It is the island of Nevis, and I am the governor's daughter. Will you be so kind—as to take me—to—"

Her voice faded into silence, as if from utter weariness.

At the mention of Nevis Burnham felt despair for a moment, and showed something of it in his face. In the darkness he had sailed toward the wrong island, and now it might be that he was no more than a few miles distant from Smith and Winch and the detested New England brig from which he had made such a violent escape.

To bring himself in touch with the governor would mean to come in touch with the chief port of the island, and this would mean, past a doubt, the risk of an encounter with Captain Smith. It was in this island that Smith had planned to sell him, either as a pirate or a slave.

How was the truth of his story of robbery and misfortune to be proved to the authorities? The violence of his escape from the brig *Virtue* would tell against him, he supposed. He had brained one man with a bottle and shot another.

"But it has to be risked," he murmured, glancing down at the girl with a calcu-

lating eye. "The game's yet to be played, and here in my hand is the card with which it must be won!"

The girl's head, with its loosened mass of bright brown hair, was against his left shoulder. He gazed into her pale face with inscrutable eyes. Her eyes were closed. He glanced at the slumbering Todd, then put out his foot and roughly prodded the lad in the ribs.

"Fetch the rest of the water from the boat," he ordered.

Todd awoke with a start, sprang to his feet, and uttered a cry of astonishment at sight of the young woman.

"Get the water," said Burnham, "and be quick about it!"

Ten minutes later the girl sat up, then got unsteadily to her feet. Her hair and face were dripping with the water which Burnham had poured over her with an unstinting hand. A delicate flame sprang alight in her cheeks. Burnham was upright on the instant. He bowed low, with modest eyes and an engaging smile.

"I am at your service, madam," he said. "If you will tell me the road to your father's house, I will do my utmost to get you there safely. You are too weak to stand. Sit down again, I beg of you, and rest a little longer. I regret vastly that I can offer you no better refreshment than this stale water."

The governor's daughter sat down and leaned against the bole of a tree. She looked from Burnham to the lad, and back to Burnham, with frank curiosity and not a little suspicion in her glance. Her eyes were darker and finer than the castaway had at first thought them; and they were fearless and honest.

"Who are you?" she asked. "And what manner of man are you, to be here on this beach, in rags, and yet with all the words and graces of a gentleman?"

James Burnham bowed again, and smiled.

"I thank you from the depths of my heart," he said. "The truth is, I am a gentleman, and for the moment in a very critical situation. But let my unfortunate story wait until you are safely restored to the arms of your family. Is Government House to the left or the right, and how far away is it?"

The young woman looked all around her and studied the curving beach. She raised a hand to the small cut and angry bruise

high up on her white forehead. Todd stood and gaped at her in wonder.

"To the left," she said, "and fully four miles away. I do not know of any road from here other than the sea beach. I was inland—I know not how far—when my horse threw me. I made my way through the jungle to the sea, and I remember vaguely walking upon the hot sand as one walks in a nightmare. And then I must have fallen."

"It was when you fell that I first saw you," replied Burnham in a soothing voice. "You were unconscious when I went to you. Thank God that my seeming misfortunes threw me upon this shore! But to return to the matter in hand, madam. Is the residence of your father near any harbor?"

"It stands above the harbor of Charles Town," she replied, her glance, full of curiosity and pity, dwelling upon the man's torn shirt of fine linen.

She took note of his shaven cheeks, and of the fact that his strong and shapely hands were clean and unblemished; also the fact that he had made no apologies for his shabby and scanty attire did not escape her. Any other than a man of breeding, she reflected, would have made all haste to explain the condition of his linen and the absence of stockings and shoes.

Though somewhat daunted by the prospect of entering Charles Town, in the harbor of which the brig *Virtue* doubtless rode at anchor, Burnham let no sign of uncertainty or dismay touch his face. He turned slightly and pointed across the shimmering sand to the little white boat.

"I think you will find it more comfortable to make the journey by water than by land," he said. "We can rig you an awning of the sail, and the lad and I can row the boat."

"By water!" she exclaimed in a startled voice. The expression of her eyes changed, and the color fled from her cheeks. "Can we not go by land—on foot along the shore? I am strong enough to walk, sir, thanks to your good care of me."

Burnham saw that she was afraid to trust herself in the boat, away from land, with him. Did she fear that he would set his sail and make for St. Kitts with her? he wondered.

"As you wish," he said tenderly. "I was thinking only of your comfort. You have suffered greatly this morning. But I

understand. You do not know me—and how should you? Henry, bring up the oars and sail from the boat and hide them somewhere in this grove. We must try to drag the boat up and hide her, too. We may need her again. And we must collect our poor provisions and stow them away in some place of safety. I must ask you to excuse me, madam, while I help the lad."

"I'll go with you in the boat!" cried the young woman, her face aflame. "And I—beg your pardon most humbly."

"No, I beg of you," returned Burnham. "What right have I to expect your trust—an outcast upon your shore? But if you care to trust me, then I thank you with all my heart. You are as brave as you are kind. Lad, collect the food and follow down to the boat. Bring along the musket."

The lady stood up again and Burnham offered her his arm. She accepted it with a shy but ravishing smile of eyes and lips. After a few steps she winced slightly and leaned upon him heavily.

"I am tired, and my poor head spins," she sighed.

Burnham slipped an arm about her slender waist and almost carried her to the boat. At a word from him Todd pushed the boat into the sea, stern first. The white surf creamed about it, hissing and flashing; but the lad waded in and held it off the shore.

Then Burnham lifted the young woman in both arms, carried her out, and placed her in the boat, amidships. The provisions and musket were soon put aboard, and the little sail was rigged above the girl as an awning.

The boat was then swung around and run into deeper water. Burnham and the lad scrambled aboard and manned the oars.

They pulled toward Charles Town, at a distance from the shore of about half a mile. There was some briskness to the wind, but the heat from the downglaring heavens and upglaring sea was terrific. The governor's daughter dozed in the shade of the tented sail. The man and the boy breathed heavily as they pulled on the oars. The sweat hopped out on their skins and ran like quicksilver. Their eyes shrank from the encompassing shimmer and glow, and when they turned their faces to the island it rocked and swayed in their sight as if a giant of earthquake shouldered the bases of its green hills.

The lad Todd failed in his stroke. Burnham turned and glanced at him, and saw that he had sagged forward across the grip of the oar. An oath trembled on the man's lips; but he remembered the young woman in time to restrain it.

"Unship your oar and lie down, lad," he said kindly.

Todd obeyed; and Burnham possessed himself of the discarded oar and pulled double. He shot a glance beneath the awning at the young woman, to see whether or not his heroic and humane action had been noticed. Her eyes were wide open and fixed upon his face in a downright stare of admiration and commendation. He lowered his own glance modestly and pulled desperately at the heavy oars.

At last the boat crawled around a point of land and turned sluggishly into the little bay which formed the harbor of Charles Town. Burnham turned on his thwart and surveyed the place with anxious and calculating eyes.

He saw three vessels riding at their anchors there, and recognized one of them as the New England brig. The town itself, clustered close to the gleaming tide at the back of the harbor, was not impressive. Its buildings were small and unbeautiful, some of sun-grayed, unpainted wood and some of pink-washed stone.

But behind the town sloped the wooded hills, and here and there through the tropical foliage shone the white façade or wide roof of some imposing mansion. The green crests of royal palms standing high above the surrounding growths marked the lines and curves of hidden drives and avenues. A spot of wind-flapped red against the green marked the position of Government House.

The governor's daughter sat up beneath the awning and glanced around the harbor.

"There is no need of landing at the jetty," she said. "If you pull ashore right here, sir, on your left—by that crooked coconut-tree—I can find a short road up to the house."

She pointed, and Burnham obeyed on the instant by swinging the boat's head to the left and pulling for the shore with renewed vigor. The change of course relieved him vastly; but still he was closer to the Virtue than he cared to be.

As he bent to the oars and drove the little boat smartly shoreward he kept his

eyes upon the brig at the back of the harbor. The keel touched the sand at the foot of the coconut-tree, and at the same moment a boat appeared around the stern of the *Virtue* and approached at racing speed to the urge of six wet blades.

Burnham snatched his oars inboard, jumped over the gunwale into the warm and shallow water, seized the young woman in his arms, and dashed ashore. As he ran across the strip of sand the report of a musket rang out from the approaching boat and a ball whined low over his head. Todd whimpered and sprang past the others into the edge of the woods.

"Who fired?" asked the girl. "What is it? Why do you run?"

"It is a long story," replied Burnham, smiling. "I will tell it later—when you are out of danger. Is this the right path?"

"Set me on my feet, so that I can see," she said.

He let her slip from his arms. She glanced hastily around.

"This is the path," she said.

They ran up it, hand in hand; but she stumbled weakly before they had advanced fifty yards. Without a word he picked her up again and dashed ahead. She uttered no protest.

The path twisted upward through the woods. The governor's daughter was of no great weight; but what with the heat of the day and his recent exertions at the oars, Burnham soon began to show signs of acute fatigue.

Still he struggled onward, holding the girl tight to his heaving breast. She gazed up into his strained and glowing face with anxious eyes.

"Put me down," she cried, "you will kill yourself else! I am not in danger. They would not dare to hurt me, whoever they are."

Burnham knew that she spoke the truth; but he had no intention of deserting that which he had every reason to believe would prove his only means of escaping the revenge of the New England shipmaster. So he continued to hold her tight and to stagger onward.

Henry Todd appeared suddenly in the path in front, musket in hand. His face was colorless and his eyes flamed.

"Go on, cap'n," he gasped. "I got this here weepen loaded an' primed, an' I'll let 'er off at the first feller what heaves in sight!"

Burnham nodded and continued his ascent of the jungle-flanked path. He stumbled once, but recovered himself with an effort which caused his face to twist with the agony of exhaustion. The young woman wrenched herself suddenly from his arms, put a hand beneath his elbow, and ran, supporting him at her side; but the pace was too brisk for him, in spite of her strong young arm, and he fell heavily in the trail and lay gasping.

She stood beside him and looked back. She saw the boy Todd, who had halted at a bend in the path, bring the musket to his shoulder. She could not see what he threatened. The thumping report rang out upon the stifling air, and the white smoke drifted slowly and clung in the foliage of the jungle.

The lad uttered a wild and exultant yell and came running up the path. The young woman heard footsteps behind her and turned to face her father.

Captain Algernon Nash, governor of Nevis, was past middle age and of impressive proportions. Running was not a favorite exercise of his. He was puffing desperately now and his round face was flaming. He had lost his hat, his wig sat upon his head at a rakish angle, and in each hand he brandished a large horse-pistol. Half a dozen servants, some black and some white, variously armed with cut-lases, clubs, and pistols, crowded upon his heels.

"You, Elizabeth!" he cried. "Turk came home with an empty saddle, and I sent a score of men out to search for you. But who are these? And what is the meaning of the musket-shots?"

The young woman put her arms about his neck.

"Turk threw me, this gentleman found me unconscious, and brought me home," she said, nodding toward Burnham. "He brought me to the harbor in a boat, and since landing we have been pursued and fired upon."

"Fired upon *you*!" roared the governor. "Zounds, but some necks will be stretched for this! Ha! here they come—and the sanctimonious Master Smith in the van, as I live!"

Burnham got to his bruised feet and bowed to Captain Nash just as Smith and his party came into sight around a kink in the trail. Henry Todd slunk behind Burnham and crouched there trembling.

"I have had the honor of doing your daughter a slight service, sir, and in return I must ask you to hear me fairly in reply to the charges which these unsavory fellows will presently make against me. This lad and I escaped from the New England brig last night," said Burnham in a labored voice.

The governor nodded and looked him over with hard eyes.

V

"I HAVE already heard something of it," said the governor dryly. "You have done my daughter a slight service, have you? I am under obligations to Hellfire Hicks, am I? What is the world coming to? But you'll have a fair hearing, my man."

Burnham drew himself up with dignity, and his glance kindled upon the other; but he made no retort, for at that moment the party from the brig halted within a few yards of their quarry and Smith began to address the governor in a high, twanging voice.

"That's him, yer honor!" he cried, pointing at Burnham and wagging his goatish beard. "Aye, that's the pirate—that's Hicks. Come ashore to see one o' his wenches, did he? Undone through the lust o' the blood! So may all lustful men be brought to justice untempered by mercy! Bid her drop her consuming hand from yer honor's neck. Clear yer eyes from the painted spell. Harden yer heart against the wiles o' the smirkin' she-devil!"

Elizabeth Nash straightened her slender, rounded form and dropped her arm from her father's neck. She still held the gold-headed whip in her right hand. Her face was like a red rose of the south and her eyes like two points of blue fire in the heart of an iceberg.

For half a second she stood thus, straight and trembling; and then she darted forward and lashed the New England shipmaster fair across the face with her whip twice, quick as lightning, with all the strength of her youth and fury.

Smith writhed, screamed an oath, then threw his arms around her. He tried to throw her, his face colorless as chalk save for the two livid welts across it.

While she swayed in his grasp, and before her father could raise his voice or a pistol, Burnham leaped upon them, seized the shipmaster's throat with his right hand, and carried them both to the ground.

He clung to the man's throat. The girl rolled clear, scrambled to her feet, and darted back to her father.

The governor and his servants bestirred themselves just in the nick of time to save Burnham from the knives and clubbed muskets of the men from the brig. As it was, Burnham received a glancing slash on the shoulder which dyed his ragged shirt as red as the governor's face, but which failed to cause him to relax his grip on his enemy's windpipe.

The battle was brisk but brief. Captain Nash fought thunderously with his voice and his clubbed pistols; but it was owing to his official authority rather than to his physical prowess that the New Englanders lost heart so soon. Two of the brig's men turned tail and ran, and the others were overpowered and disarmed. Two of the governor's servants detached James Burnham from the limp and livid shipmaster.

What with righteous indignation and breathlessness, the governor was on the point of strangulation, and Elizabeth had subsided in a swoon immediately after her escape from Smith's infuriated embrace.

During the short journey to Government House, Burnham reeled at the governor's elbow. Though his brain whirled and his stomach quaked with fatigue and loss of blood, he was more than satisfied with the trend of the day's adventures. But in spite of his contentment of mind and his amazing physical endurance, he fell unconscious within a few yards of the governor's door.

Burnham heard a voice, vast, vague, impersonal, yet insistent. It seemed to come to him through rolling fogs, from limitless voids of space. For ages he listened to it, mildly interested, unable and unanxious to detect any spoken word in it. He reflected, without apprehension or pleasure, that it was probably the voice of the Last Trump.

Doubtless it was because he lay at the bottom of the sea that the voice came to him in so vague and dulled a tone. He felt the deep tides wash softly, yet mightily, across his breast; he felt the silt of the deep-sea bed creep and settle upon his motionless limbs.

The voice became less vague, less vast, more distinct, as if it reached him through shallower waters. And now it sounded almost human. Did it address itself particularly to him? Did it call him? He

felt the fathoms of sea lighten on his breast and the silt of the sea-floor slip away from his limbs.

He aroused himself and swam upward, upward, through black waters and brown, through green tide-bands and blue. At last he swam frantically, with bursting lungs.

He snatched for breath with a choking sob and opened his eyes. He lay on cool sheets and looked up at a white ceiling high above him. Two faces swam into view between his eyes and the distant ceiling—one that of a young man whom he had never seen before, the other that of the governor of Nevis.

Captain Nash's broad visage had lost much of its explosive coloring, and the eyes had altered in expression until they were almost tender. Burnham gazed up blankly at the two faces for a few seconds, then suddenly remembered all.

"Thank God you've come around!" exclaimed Captain Nash. "I was beginning to fear that you had slipped away from us, my dear sir."

My dear sir! That sounded very pleasant and promising to the man on the bed. His brain became clear, and he thought swiftly. He lowered his lids, as if in the extremity of weakness and weariness; but in reality he distrusted his eyes and closed them to veil his thoughts. They were still closed when he asked, in a feeble voice, if the governor's daughter had escaped serious harm.

"She is recovering her strength and composure splendidly," replied Captain Nash. "She suffered no serious injury, either from her accident or the attack of that rogue Smith, thanks to you. She tells me that you named yourself to her as Burnham. Is this so?"

"It is my name," answered the other slowly and weakly. "James Burnham, at your service. I am a Berkshire man—of the family of Burnham of Burnham."

"Say no more, my dear lad," replied the governor cordially. "Mr. Willis, who is a surgeon, says that you must not be questioned just now. I have heard of Sir Walter Burnham, of Burnham, and of his unusual custom of having all his offspring marked with the paternal crest; and I have seen your naked back. You are among friends, lad. Later, when you are stronger, you must tell us the story of the misadventures which threw you upon our shores

in such desperate plight. Now swallow whatever mixture Mr. Willis gives you, clear your mind of worry, and try to sleep."

Burnham's eyelids fluttered, but they did not open.

"You are very kind," he said, "and I pray you to extend your kindness to the unfortunate lad Todd, who helped me escape from the New England brig. I know nothing of him except that he was ill-used aboard the brig and befriended me in my grievous need."

"Spoken like a Christian and a gentleman!" exclaimed Nash. "Rest easy on the score of the lad Todd, my friend. He'll be well cared for, I promise you."

At this point the young surgeon ventured to pluck the governor by the sleeve and whisper a caution in his ear, and the two left the room. Mr. Willis was soon back, with a glass in his hand; and Burnham swallowed a long and bitter draft without so much as the breath of an oath. He even went so far as to thank the young surgeon humbly for his attentions.

"Don't mention it, sir, I beg of you," replied Mr. Willis. "I am proud to be of service to a gentleman of your courage and name."

James Burnham's wound was not a serious one, and Mr. Willis knew something of his profession. For three days the invalid lay in the big bed in the great, high-ceilinged, shaded room, and was waited upon hand and foot by the governor, the doctor, and a host of servants.

On the morning of the fourth day, after the young surgeon had fixed him up among pillows in a big chair near one of the windows, the governor brought Elizabeth to call upon him, to pay her respects, and to hear the story of his adventures.

Elizabeth approached Burnham slowly across the polished floor, regarding him gravely, tenderly, steadily with her splendid eyes. Her clear cheeks were blooming with health and, perhaps, a little with the excitement of this meeting. The small wound on her forehead was hidden by a band of her hair.

Her portly father strutted and bowed beside her, evidently vastly pleased with himself and the two young people. He was as romantic as the slenderest ensign; and he was so well informed concerning the landed families of Berkshire that he had the name and rent-roll of every one of the Burnham manors on the tip of his tongue.

Burnham met the young woman's gaze with a nicely calculated expression of admiration and modest confusion in his eyes.

"Thank Heaven you have suffered no serious hurt!" he murmured.

She stood beside his chair, placed her right hand in his, and thanked him for his heroic services in a few shy and generous words. He bowed his head in silence, raised her hand a little, and pressed his lips to her cool fingers.

James Burnham's story was a long one, and the latter part of it contained much truth. From the time of his departure from Kingston with his false friend Queery to the moment of his seeing Elizabeth fall unconscious on the sand, he told his adventures as they had actually happened. He spoke modestly, though he raised the sum of the money which had been given to him by the baronet, and taken from him by Mr. Queery, from five hundred guineas to fifteen hundred guineas. There was no great harm in this, perhaps. A natural, youthful vanity and pride of place would account for a mild deception of the kind.

Furthermore, it appeared that he had encountered a great deal of difficulty in persuading his father to allow him to leave England and seek a career in the west. His first venture was lost, and his pride would not permit of his drawing again on his father within the year; but he had funds of his own, derived from the estate of a maternal great-aunt. He would send a letter to his agents by the next home-bound vessel. He would also communicate with his parents, though he was reluctant to cause them worry and anxiety with a tale of his misadventures; and so on, and so on.

"I shall be only too pleased to advance you whatever sum you may require while waiting for a reply from your agents," said the governor cordially. "I should do much more than that on either one of two counts. In the first place, I owe to you the life of my only child; in the second, you are a gentleman in sorry distress, and that through no fault of your own."

"I can see nothing of the nature of distress about my present circumstances," replied Burnham, smiling from one to the other of his visitors. "If you can possibly consider my services to your daughter as the means of saving her life, then the consciousness of well-doing is all the reward I ask. In short, sir, I must refuse your

very generous offer to advance me money. If you will be so gracious as to extend your hospitality to me until such time as I hear from England, and to make my condition known to a tailor, I shall not stand in any need of funds. And I shall be happy to assist you as a secretary, or in any capacity, during the period of awaiting a remittance from my agents."

Captain Nash wagged his head, but at the same time he looked pleased and vastly relieved. The fact is, he had feared that the young man would want to borrow a considerable sum of money. Though comfortably off, he was not wealthy; and he knew that even the most courageous and well-connected young bloods have, in time of plenty, a sad trick of forgetting the hands that have helped them in their day of want.

"As you will," he said. "We forgive you your stiff-necked pride. Pride of that kidney is a quality I admire vastly. Look upon this house as your home for as long as you can put up with our quiet life, my boy. And I'll send a tailor to you within the hour. You'll need pocket-money. Here is something that belongs to you."

He thrust a hand into a pocket and drew forth and counted out twenty-five golden guineas.

"They are yours," he continued. "They are your share of the fine which I, as chief magistrate and commander-in-chief of this island, laid upon Amos Smith, master of the brig *Virtue*, for imprisoning the person of a free subject of his majesty. Also, I cautioned him that if he ever came unfavorably to my notice again I would hang him like a pirate. The old fox got up his anchor an hour ago."

James Burnham was glad of the twenty-five guineas. Schemes took shape slowly in his brain. They were vague at first, but as he recovered strength he recovered self-assurance. Surely something was to be made, he reflected, of this very favorable situation in which chance had placed him.

Chance had done well for him, he admitted, but he saw that he could not leave his future entirely in the swift yet fumbling hands of that hysterical goddess. He studied the situation coolly, weighing and pondering in turn the adverse and the favorable conditions.

Against him were his empty pockets, his absolute lack of expectations, his hopeless

estrangement from his family, and his shady reputation in England. For him, like high trump-cards in an otherwise hopeless hand, were the governor and the governor's daughter—the grateful and generous old sailor, the grateful and romantic young woman.

He had won their gratitude and respect. Very well, then. He must make the most of this unfortunate state of affairs while it lasted—in other words, before any communication concerning him could reach the governor from England.

Burnham calculated that he would have three months, and perhaps more, of security and consideration in the island. Of course, he would not receive any money in reply to his letter to his fictitious agents in London, and so would finally stand exposed before his new friends as a perverter of the truth, at least; but he had strength of mind enough not to let this thought worry him.

Three months are as useful as a year to a man of action. He was determined that whatever his fortune might be at the time, he would be gone from Nevis before the end of three months. This being the case, he wrote to his father as well as to the non-existent men of business.

Burnham's letter to his father was a masterpiece of impudence and fiction. He penned it with his tongue in his cheek and his eyes glinting with those impish and menacing cross-lights which gave him that expression of sardonic squint for which he was later famous.

Both letters departed for England two weeks later, aboard a square-bowed merchantman. The governor sent a whole packet of mail, both official and private, by the same ship.

The social life of Nevis lacked much in extent but nothing in dash. Government House was the hub of it, the governor its head, and Elizabeth Nash its heart. So James Burnham's position in society was an enviable one.

His position in the governor's house was all that a young man of pride and spirit could desire. Captain Nash treated him with consideration and affection, and took his arm whenever they walked abroad together. Elizabeth was his constant companion indoors and out. Early every morning they rode through the jungles and over the hills, or beside the sea, returning before the heat of the day.

At his own request James was allowed to assist the governor in his duties, sometimes as a deputy, sometimes as a secretary. The work was not arduous. Burnham inquired for Peter Queery, but the name was not known on the island.

There was an English regiment stationed in Nevis that had been out of England for almost a year, and it was with the officers of this regiment and the most prominent planters that Burnham associated when not in attendance upon the governor or Elizabeth. By lucky play he increased his twenty-five guineas to one hundred.

So three weeks passed pleasantly and without accident, and Burnham studied Elizabeth Nash sedulously every day. At the end of the three weeks he was quite certain that she was in love with him. So he decided to win her, to marry her, before any possibility of his exposure. Once married to her, he would be safe from starvation, at the worst. A post of some sort would be found for him, and it would be to his father-in-law's interest to keep tight lips on the story of his past.

Burnham came to this decision late at night, and the first news that he heard next morning was that a frigate had but just let go her anchors in the roadstead.

With the assistance of his valet he made short work of an elaborate toilet. Within half an hour of joining the governor the commander of the frigate and a number of other officers arrived to pay their respects. Five of these callers belonged to a relief company of the Sixty-Second Regiment, which had come to strengthen the garrison of Nevis.

Burnham, standing straight, cool, and faultlessly attired at the governor's elbow, glanced over the assembled company and felt a sudden, paralyzing contraction of the heart. Young Mr. Stanton, whom he had cheated at cards in London, and who had taken Kitty Trimmer away from him, returned his horrified glance with very evident astonishment and displeasure.

So this was the end of it! James Burnham withdrew his gaze from the ensign's face and felt a sudden cold sweat spring out upon his skin.

VI

JAMES BURNHAM'S consternation upon beholding Mr. Percy Stanton was deep and acute, but the recovery of his amazing self-control was as quick as light.

His glance passed unconcernedly from the ensign's face, and again went lightly over the group of visitors. It finally came to rest on an open doorway beyond the officers, where flickering leaf-shadows patterned flags of gray stone.

The formal greetings were soon finished. Burnham was introduced to several of the officers. All were invited to remain to the elaborate breakfast of that period and that country, which would be served at half past ten o'clock.

The company broke into groups and pairs, laughing and chatting. The governor and young Willis moved among them, asking about the voyage, showing the way to seats, beckoning to footmen freighted with trays of tall glasses. Burnham assisted in the duties of hospitality with a calm face and veiled eye. Close at his heels followed a black servant armed with cool drinks. He came at last to young Mr. Stanton, halted, and bowed low.

"Let me offer you a glass of this punch, sir," he said. "Rum, a dash of orange bitters, sugar, spring-water, and a slice of green lime. Very good, I assure you. Cools the blood, quenches the thirst, and at the same time pleases the palate."

Stanton's cheeks flamed and he stared insolently.

"Mr. James Burnham, of Swan Alley, as I live!" he drawled.

"Say, rather, of Burnham in Berkshire," returned the older man softly. "But if I have the honor of your acquaintance, sir, it was likely enough come by during my brief and somewhat humiliating sojourn in Swan Alley. Yes, it could not have been at Burnham. You will forgive me, sir, I'm sure, that your name and the fact of our former acquaintance have slipped my memory."

The blood thickened in the ensign's smooth cheeks.

"So that's the line you take, is it?" he whispered hotly. "You don't know me, hey? 'Sblood, sir, I'll prick your failing memory for you! I'm one of the men you plucked in your own parlor in Swan Alley—with loaded dice. D'ye get that, my fine Mr. Burnham of Burnham?"

"I hear you," replied Burnham easily, with a slow smile on his lips and a flickering cross-gleam commencing to show in his gray eyes. "I hear you, and I don't like the porcine quality of your grunt. After breakfast, my fine fellow, I'll take much

pleasure in showing you the beauties of his excellency's gardens. I know of a secluded spot much better suited than this room to the voicing of your ill-bred and unwarrantable assertions; and if we each have a discreet friend in attendance, we'll do very nicely!"

"What?" exclaimed Stanton. "Am I invited to fight a common cheat?"

"You are invited to make less noise," retorted Burnham, smiling as if he were engaged in the most friendly conversation imaginable, but at the same time thrusting his face within eight inches of that of the indignant ensign. "You are invited, most humbly, to make a mighty effort and try to behave like a person of breeding," he continued. "Of course, if your courage fails you, run to the governor for protection. Cry out that I cheated you in play—and then prove it. Aye, prove it! See if your word is better than mine on this island!"

Stanton trembled and lost color, and his glance shifted from James Burnham's terrific regard. To look into Burnham's eyes just then was to look into a hell of ice and white fire.

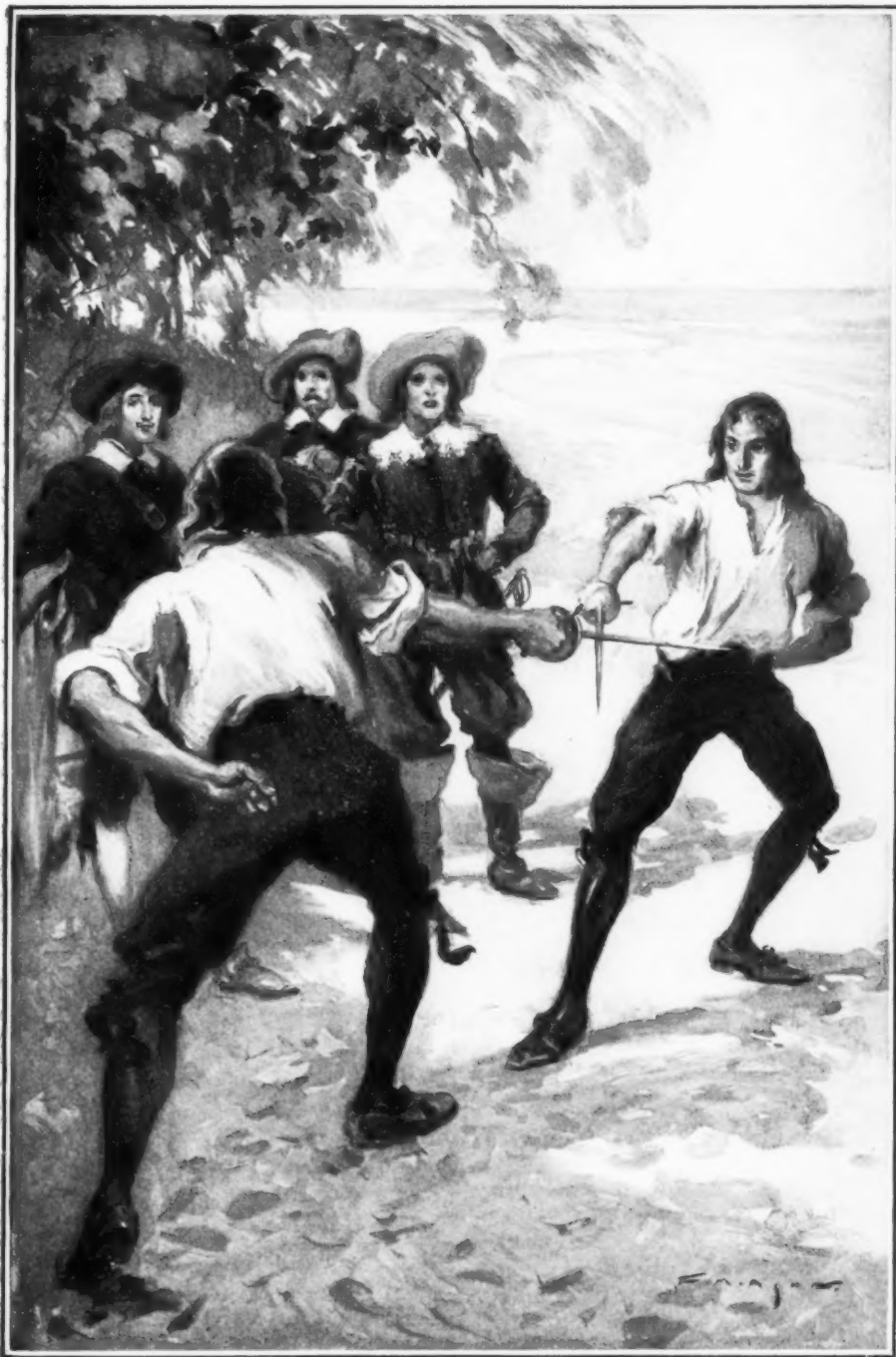
"I'll follow you to the garden," he stammered.

"After breakfast," said Burnham, laughing pleasantly. "And now I must insist on your trying a glass of this punch. Sam, the gentleman will drink—and I will join him in a glass. To our next meeting, sir!"

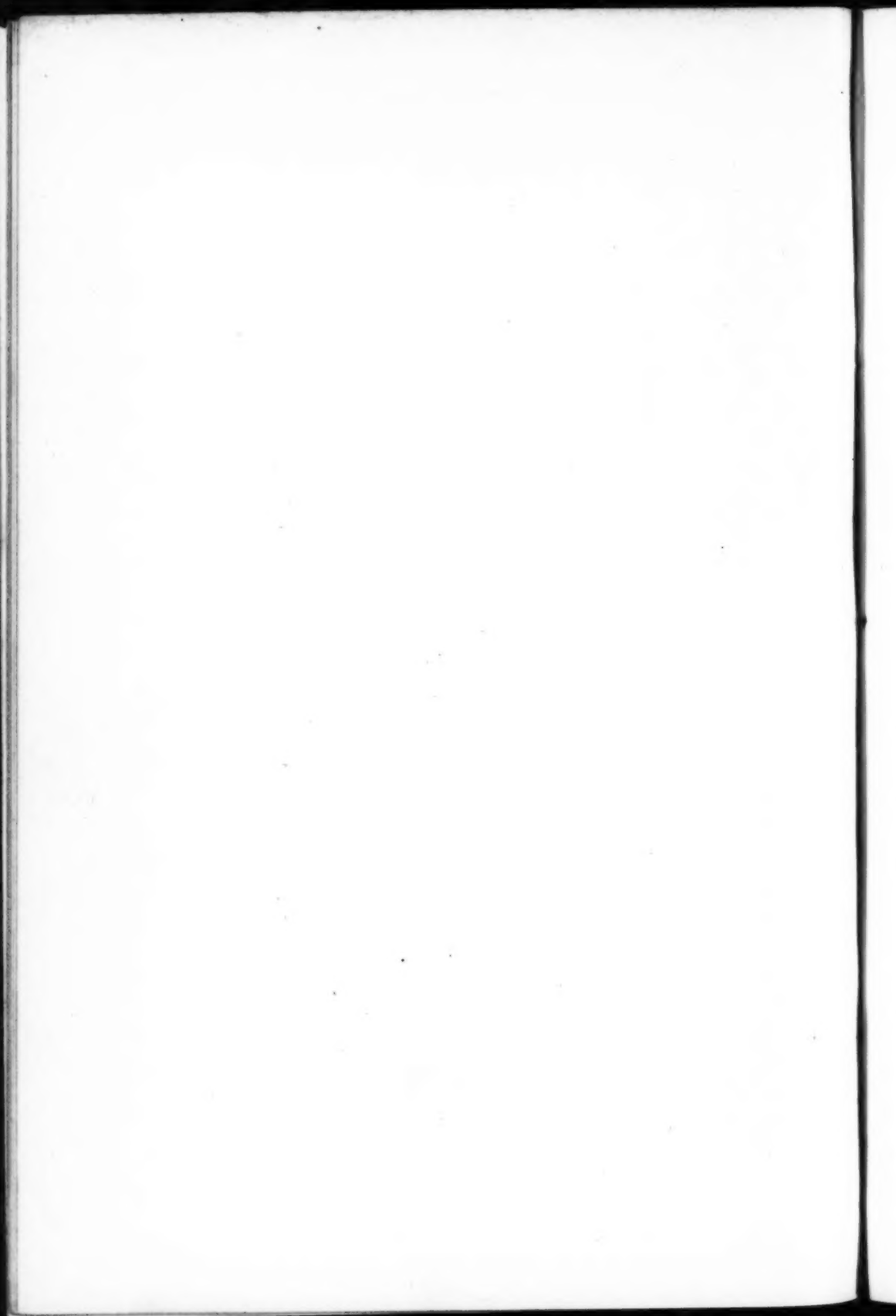
They both drank, Burnham with an ironical bow and a sardonic leer, young Stanton mechanically and hurriedly. Stanton was confused with shame and rage and something very much like fear.

It was of this emotion so closely resembling fear that he was ashamed. He wished this fellow Burnham to the lower regions; but he felt no very keen appetite for the task of sending him there. He wished heartily that he had kept a guard on his tongue.

At one and the same time he inwardly cursed his lack of discretion and his lack of courage. He was no coward—so he told himself, and it is unlikely that he could have found any other man to believe him—but the eyes of James Burnham played the mischief with his nerves, and always had. Why hadn't he left the fellow in peace? Why had he referred to that little matter of cheating that had taken place so long ago in far-away London?



THE SLENDER BLADES STRUCK AND GLANCED AND WRITHED THE ONE UPON THE OTHER



Miss Nash appeared, and her father's guests were presented to her. Soon after this all passed into another room, where a long table was set for a breakfast of even more than usual profusion.

The meal began with several choice varieties of fish and went on to turtle steak, to pepper-pot, baked yams, roast fowl, curries, omelets, jellies, and fruits. Spirits and wines were served throughout the meal. Decanters and gilt-inscribed bottles stood honestly upon the white cloth, and something was within reach of every hand. In case the liquor which you particularly wanted happened to be more than the length of your arm away, all you had to do was to ask some one to push it along to you.

But few of the gentlemen patronized Elizabeth Nash's silver tea-urn. Only James Burnham and the lady drank tea; and you must not think that Burnham drank it with any idea of pleasing the lady. His motive for avoiding the spirits and wines was not a tender or sentimental one. He was simply considering the steadiness of his eye and his hand, with a view to making a neat job of clipping Stanton's comb.

Gentlemen were expected to drink more than was good for them in those robust days, and in this matter they usually did what was expected of them. Mothers, wives, daughters, and sweethearts were not shocked unduly by flushed faces, thick voices, and meandering feet. Every well-conditioned householder familiarized himself with the pattern of his dining-room carpet by frequent inspections of it at close range.

Burnham chatted agreeably with the men at his elbows, ate heartily, and drank three cups of tea. He smiled frequently at Elizabeth, and she never failed to meet his glance and return his smile. He showed an unruffled countenance to the company at large, but despair, chagrin, and even a vague sense of regret gnawed his heart.

Even if he could bring Stanton to a fight he would gain but little, for he knew that to kill his enemy would be to shatter his own fortune. He might wound the ensign; but how would that silence him?

He turned the matter over and over in his tortured mind and found it a grim riddle. At last he gave it up as hopeless and turned his attention to the conversation of two young men on his left.

"Percy means it," said one. "He is a fool about her. He fairly forced Mrs. Black to bring her along as a companion—so the major says."

"Who wouldn't be?" replied the other. "A nymph, by the Lord Harry! I'd try my own luck there but for the fact that I'm too poor to support a penniless wife. But Stanton has plenty of money and more coming to him. Daughter of a parson, isn't she?"

"That's what she says," replied the first speaker, "and Mrs. Black vouches for it. Percy's family won't like it, I'll swear, for they want him to marry into the nobility. You know, I suppose, that the founder of the Stanton fortune was a corset-maker. That was Percy's grandfather. Wish my worthy grandsire had tried something of the kind!"

Burnham listened to all this with interest, wondering who the penniless charmer could be who had won such a hold upon Stanton's affections. He thought her a fool, whoever she might be. And then his mind went in search of some way of turning this information to his own advantage. Might he not silence Stanton by threatening to tell to this new charmer the story of Kitty Trimmer? It was well worth considering.

In the mean time Percy Stanton had eaten little and drunk a great deal. He was not happy. The thought of the interview in the garden stuck in his crop like a bullet and refused to be washed down.

His hatred of James Burnham grew with the passing of every minute and the emptying of every glass. He could see no way of avoiding the fight. A condition of which Burnham was ignorant made it impossible for him to get to his feet and denounce the cheat to the assembled company.

The punch did not give him courage. At last he decided, confusedly, that he would eat his words rather than fight with Burnham. His courage continued to ebb and his mind to cloud. He would find out how much Burnham knew. He would come to an understanding with the fellow.

Burnham went to the garden alone, having decided not to force the ensign to a duel unless the threat to interview the new charmer should fail to silence him. He made his way to a secluded corner of the grounds and sat down on a stone bench in the shade of an almond-tree. He was in a black mood. Was this chance of estab-

lishing himself in the world to be dashed from him by a cowardly, pie-faced simpleton like Percy Stanton?

Half an hour passed. He left the seat and paced the sanded paths. The heat was stifling. The temperature of his blood was choking. He moved toward the house and soon came in sight of the two young officers whose conversation he had overheard at the breakfast-table. They greeted him with winks and laughter.

"Here's a pretty to do," said one. "The ladies have come ashore and gone into barracks, and the fair Kitty has sent Major Black's man over here with a note for Percy, summoning him to her side. But Percy is still sleeping under the breakfast-table. A gay blade is Percy!"

Burnham laughed lightly.

"The heat was too much for him, I suppose," he said. "I must have him carried to my quarters and put decently to bed. These West Indian breakfasts frequently prove too much for new arrivals. But—ah, you mentioned a fair Kitty. Mr. Stanton's wife, I suppose?"

"Not yet, though I am willing to bet two to one, in guineas, that she will be Mrs. Percy Stanton before we ever get back to England," replied the youth who had spoken before. "In the mean time she is Mistress Kitty Trimmer, lady-companion to the wife of our senior major. She is a beauty, sir, a beauty—and not worth a penny, I hear."

"Very romantic, I'm sure," said Burnham pleasantly. "I am glad to hear that Mr. Stanton can afford to be romantic. And now, gentlemen, if you will be so kind as to excuse me, I'll go and look after the disabled lover. If you want anything, shout for it. Some one will be sure to hear you, for the place is overrun with servants of all colors and shades."

Burnham hurried toward the house with an exultant smile upon his face.

"Very civil fellow," said one of the young bloods to the other.

"Yes; but there is something deuced queer about his eyes," replied the other. "I'd be sorry to get into an argument with him, snap me if I wouldn't! One of the Berkshire Burnhams, so old Nash tells me. He's got his queer eyes on the girl, that's my opinion."

Burnham found Stanton sitting up on the floor with a dazed and sullen expression on his face, his stock undone, and

his head and uniform dripping with water. The servants had found him and, quite as a matter of course, administered the usual treatment for such cases.

It was evident that Stanton was the only one of the guests who had completely succumbed to the governor's hospitality. He looked at Burnham and scowled. Burnham bowed ironically.

"I no longer thirst for your blood, you'll doubtless be glad to hear," he said. "I hasten to congratulate you on your sweet romance. I never suspected you of such fidelity. I hear that Kitty is as charming as ever. You must convey my kindest regards to her as soon as you recover command of your legs."

Mr. Stanton blinked, groaned, and swore.

"I am wondering," continued Burnham coolly, "if you did not make a mistake this morning. Is it possible that you ever met me and Kitty Trimmer when we lived together in Swan Alley? Think again, my dear sir; and give your whole mind to it. For the life of me, I can't recall ever having seen your face before—and it is not a face to be lightly forgotten."

Stanton glared at him in a dazed sort of way and groaned again.

"You should consider the lady's feelings, as you are so fond of her," continued Burnham, leering. "Live and let live is a good motto for gentlemen in your position. Come, bestir your wits and tell me if you and I—and Kitty—are to be friendly strangers—or what we used to be."

Stanton got unsteadily to his feet.

"They wouldn't believe you," he said dully. "Nobody would listen to you. It would be two against one. You couldn't harm us."

Burnham laughed.

"Go talk it over with Kitty," he said. "She has a sharp brain. You are in no condition to think, even for yourself. Let me know your decision some time to-morrow, when you are sober."

Burnham retired to his room. Stanton rearranged his dress with fumbling fingers, wiped his face, found his hat, and stumbled away from Government House. He was directed to the barracks at the back of the town by an obliging negro, and in the course of time found his way to Major Black's quarters.

Mrs. Black was the first member of the household whom he happened to encounter.

She was a large woman with a long, weather-beaten face and a small, calculating eye. Her usual manner with Percy Stanton was one of playful auntly affection; but just now she was far too deeply agitated to take the trouble to be either playful or affectionate. She grasped him by the arm.

"What's all this?" she exclaimed. "A nice position you have put me in—me, a decent woman and the daughter of an archdeacon! Did you get Kitty's note? What do you intend to do about it?"

Stanton stuck out his chest and frowned. He was not to be browbeaten by this grasping old woman, at any rate.

"What are you talking about?" he demanded.

"Talking about!" shrilled the lady. "Enough, in truth, to set this whole island agog! Enough to cause my venerable father to turn over in his grave! Oh, I was a fool to have anything to do with your low dissembling. Kitty—your young woman—has heard that a gentleman at Government House is an old acquaintance of hers. Now the cat is out of the bag with a vengeance, and I am in everlasting disgrace."

"You have been handsomely paid for whatever risk you have taken," retorted the ensign with a sneer. "You have bled me, and that's the truth, you old harridan, stap me else. As for this former acquaintance of Kitty's, this gentleman at Government House—bah, I care no more for him than I do for your venerable papa in the village churchyard. I have already met him. Your delicate reputation has nothing to fear from him, I assure you. But where is Kitty? Take me to her."

"You have met him?" cried Mrs. Black. "And you have no fear of what he knows? And yet Kitty has confessed to me that he knew her in Wantage, where she was the—"

"What's that?" roared Stanton, laying violent hold of the woman's plump shoulders. "What lie is this you have frightened out of her?"

Mrs. Black was cowed. The color dropped from her long face.

"She—she said that her father is the tailor of Wantage, and—and this gentleman is a son of Sir Walter Burnham, of Burnham," stammered the woman.

"Is that all?" exclaimed Stanton. "Well, what of that? This James Burn-

ham knows me, too—and I know him. He'll keep his mouth shut about the tailor of Wantage, I promise you! All that you have to do, madam, is to keep *your* mouth shut, too."

With that he shook the wife of his senior major, then left her in tears of relief and general nervous agitation, and strode off in search of his Kitty. He found her at last, crouched upon the floor in the corner of an empty room, with her face hidden in her hands. Tears glistened between her white and tapering fingers. Her bright and luxuriant hair, as soft as silk and as rich in tone as the straw of ripe wheat, had escaped from its braids and ribbons and now cascaded across her pliant, quaking shoulders and over her pulsing bosom. She was small, slender, delicately rounded from crown to heel.

Stanton knelt beside her and lifted her in both arms until her small head rested upon his right shoulder and her wonderful tresses streamed over his bright tunic. He loved her. She was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, according to his own standards of beauty. At that time his infatuation for her was stronger than his passion for play and wine. Such manliness as he had been born the possessor of had not yet been dissipated by stupid and vicious living.

He tried to comfort her, kissing her wet cheeks and eyelids and whispering into her shell-like ear that she had nothing to fear from James Burnham. He assured her that he had Burnham completely silenced and in his power, that Burnham could as ill afford to refer to the past as she could.

Kitty ceased weeping and sighed. She opened her blue eyes, slipped her tender arms about her lover's neck, and thanked him with a kiss.

The shadows were long in the narrow streets and painted gardens and a cool breeze fanned in from the sea. James Burnham sat in the rose garden with Elizabeth Nash and read aloud to her from a book of verses.

VII

STANTON arranged a secret meeting with James Burnham for that same night. They met on a white track above the town, several hours after midnight, by the light of a belated and reduced moon and a million white stars. The long streamers of

sugar-cane and bananas whispered around them in the cool sea breeze.

Both men had been sitting late with roistering companions. The ensign showed it in his flushed face and slightly deranged costume; but he was sober. Burnham was cool, mentally and physically. He was all in white linen and silk, and looked a notable dandy of original ideas. He carried a long walking-cane of amber-colored glass and smoked a long pipe. Under the whimsical half-lights of the stars and the old moon he cut an exceedingly romantic and attractive figure.

"Is it live and let live?" he asked quietly. "Or is it to remember and make an unseemly disturbance in this peaceful spot?"

"Live and let live," replied Stanton breathlessly. "Forget the past, and act as if we had never known each other before."

"Very good! I am glad to see that you have come to your senses and that I am not compelled to put you out of the way," returned Burnham. "I give you my word that I shall stand by my part of the agreement so long as you keep faith as to yours. We need not shake hands on it, I think; and I tell you now that, whatever degree of friendship I may pretend to feel toward you in the future, I don't like you."

"And I don't like you, Heaven knows!" retorted the ensign. "But I'll keep faith with you, I swear."

Burnham went back to Government House, went to bed, and slept soundly. Stanton went back to barracks, found three kindred souls still busy with the dice, and joined them. He was already a confirmed gambler. He played until sunrise with better fortune than was usual with him.

A dozen men and women went for an early morning canter along the firm sands beside the sea. These rides were a favorite form of amusement with the governing classes of the islands—with the high officials, the naval and military officers, and the wealthy planters.

Major Black was there, accompanied by his wife and Miss Kitty Trimmer. Elizabeth Nash and James Burnham were also present. Mr. Stanton lay at home, sunk seventy fathoms deep in thick and heavy slumber.

Miss Nash and Mr. Burnham led the way for the first half-mile, exchanging few words, and those absolutely commonplace, and many glances. The lady—bless her

pure and tender heart!—had been born a mistress of the art of the eye. She had never cultivated it, to her knowledge, until recently.

No other man had ever interested her as James Burnham did. I think she was half in love with him by this time—she who had never before loved any man but her own father.

The romantic circumstances of her first meeting with Burnham had a great deal to do with the tender quality of her emotions toward him. He had inspired gratitude and admiration in her heart during the first hours of their acquaintance. His respectful, almost devotional attitude since his illness, had appealed to her strongly.

A better man than James Burnham might have ventured all and won all in a day with her; but James Burnham would have lost all. He had played the game so far with amazing delicacy and understanding of the girl's nature and his own; and now he rode at her stirrup and wondered if he dared risk the final throw.

He turned slightly in his saddle and looked at her fairly; and her eyes came to his on the instant, the white lids drooping in a tender and veiled regard. His own gaze softened; something like remorse moved feebly within him, and his cool blood jumped briskly with admiration. He was about to speak when two riders passed at a hand-gallop, the long skirt of one of them brushing his near stirrup. A tinkle of familiar laughter rang in his ears.

Burnham looked ahead and beheld Kitty Trimmer's graceful back and the gleam of her harvest-ripe hair beneath the jaunty slant of a wide, plumed hat. Where had the tailor's daughter learned that trick of wearing a hat so that a man's pulses quickened at the first glimpse of the hat alone? The art had always been hers.

She was riding with a very young gentleman from the frigate. She turned her head and glanced back over her shoulder, and for a second her glance was held by Burnham's fixed and expressionless stare. He read fear, inquiry—yes, and a gleam of coquettish challenge in those blue eyes. Brief as the glance was, he was able to read all this because he knew the girl's eyes of old.

He turned to Elizabeth Nash and smiled.

"That must be the young lady of whom I heard so much yesterday," he said. "A friend of one of the majors' wives, I be-

lieve. She is the toast of the regiment, I hear. A pretty little thing, don't you think?"

"Oh, I should call her more than pretty," replied the governor's daughter. "I think she is lovely! I think she is beautiful!"

"Lovely? Beautiful?" repeated Burnham consideringly. "No, my dear lady, I should not call her beautiful"; and he looked at his companion with a glance that said, as plainly as words, that he knew to whom he would apply that term if he dared.

Elizabeth opened her eyes wide upon him in tenderness, wonder, and allurements for a fraction of a second, then veiled them and turned her softly tinted face away from him. Her eyes were no brighter than Kitty's; but they were more versatile, finer, deeper in meaning.

James Burnham, being what he was, felt the charms of Elizabeth with his mind rather than his heart. His nature was more responsive to the glittering attractions of little Kitty Trimmer.

Burnham met Kitty formally that same evening. He bowed low over her hand and silently cursed the trick of fate that had brought her to Nevis; for he had loved her, in his own peculiar way, and was now confused to find that the old fire was still burning strongly.

Three weeks passed; and during that time Kitty Trimmer made no small stir in the island. Young Mr. Willis, the surgeon, fell in love with her. Captain Sterling, a wealthy planter and a widower of some years' standing, did the same; and so did half a dozen midshipmen from the frigate and half a dozen ensigns and lieutenants of the regiment. Stanton and Burnham were still in that same state.

Stanton tortured his heart with jealous fears and befuddled his brain with strong waters. Burnham hung in the wind, torn between sanity and madness, between cool plans for his advancement and establishment in life and a hot desire to follow his inclinations.

In this temper he made no progress in his affair with the governor's daughter, though he held things as they were by means of devotional silences. I do not think that Elizabeth was in any hurry to have him declare himself.

Kitty now felt no warmer emotion for James Burnham than fear. She liked and

admired Mr. Willis; but she remained faithful to Stanton, though she flirted outrageously with all her admirers.

I have mentioned Captain Sterling, the wealthy planter. It was he who, months before, had purchased a brig-load of jailbirds from historic Newgate; but the brig had never come to port in Nevis, and her fate was a mystery to the worthy planter.

The truth of the matter is that, three weeks out from the Thames, John Trimmer had freed himself from his irons by heroic efforts, had then freed his desperate companions, had led them up from the stinking hold, overpowered and slaughtered the officers and crew, and taken command of the ship. That is what John Trimmer had done; and now, whenever he was not wondering about the fate of his cargo of jailbirds, Captain Sterling was dancing attendance on John Trimmer's sister.

Three weeks after the arrival of the frigate in Nevis, while the society of the little island was engaged with feasting, junketings, and flirtations, a small bark entered the harbor with a fine story to tell of recent high-sea outrages that had taken place to the southward. The master of the bark told his news to the governor of the island and the commander of the frigate. From his account it was evident that a new and exceedingly venturesome gentleman of fortune had set to work among the islands.

This latest practitioner was not to be confounded with Major Deck, Hellfire Hicks, or Duval. He sailed a big, white schooner and flew a red flag emblazoned with a device that might be intended to represent a broken leg-iron. The schooner had already been named the Wasp by honest seafarers, because of the swiftness of her sting.

She had already stung three times, to the sure knowledge of the master of the bark—once off Carlisle Bay, in Barbados, and twice off St. Lucia. The dreadful and brazen outrages against humanity and law had been viewed from hilltops ashore. In each case the helpless watchers had seen man after man make the short, bitter passage of the plank, prodded and quickened by knives and cutlasses. In every case the despoiled ship had been sent to a deep-sea grave after her crew.

The governor and Captain Moore were horrified and infuriated by the shipmaster's story. They might well demand to know what the world was coming to—

which they did. They demanded the information of each other, and of the master of the bark. They pointed the question with shaking fists and embellished it with terrific sea-oaths—for the governor, too, had once commanded a ship.

Their faces darkened from red to purple. Piracy was no new thing to them; but this spoiling of cargoes, murdering of honest seamen, and scuttling of honest hulls in fair view of land—of land owned and governed by the English crown—was too flagrant a thing for them to consider with any degree of composure. Neither Duval, Deck, nor Hellfire Hicks had even been guilty of such insolence. These deeds of the Wasp were slaps in the faces of their majesties, of their majesties' representatives, and of their majesties' ships.

The frigate departed for the field of the Wasp's activities three hours later with at least half a dozen of Kitty Trimmer's love-lorn swains aboard.

Two days later, when James Burnham entered the governor's cabinet in the cool of the morning, he found that his excellency had received a bag of letters from England and the southward islands. A merchantman had just arrived from Barbados and had brought the mails from the sloop-of-war Tartar.

A letter from the Tartar's commander to the governor was the most important item of the mails. It announced that the sloop-of-war, which was fresh out from England, would remain in Carlisle Bay for eight or ten days, undergoing some slight repairs to her yards and spars, and would then weigh anchor for Nevis. She was commissioned to police the narrow seas about the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis, and so leave bigger ships free to be set at bigger undertakings.

Enclosed in the letter was a list of the sloop's officers. The governor was sitting at his table and reading this list at the moment of Burnham's entrance.

"Letters from home, my lad," said Captain Nash, "by way of Barbados. Nothing important in the English packet. Nothing for you; but, of course, it is too soon for you to expect answers to your letters."

"Yes, sir," replied Burnham, with a flicker of relief in his eyes.

"The Tartar, sloop-of-war, is now in Carlisle Bay," continued the governor. "She'll be here in the course of twelve or

fourteen days, so her commander writes. And he sends me a list of his officers. Do you happen to have any relative in the navy, lad?"

James Burnham was looking out of the open window when the question was put, and he answered it instantly, without turning his head.

"Alexander, my younger brother, is a lieutenant in the navy," he said coolly. "But why do you ask, sir? Can it be that he's aboard this sloop you speak of?"

"That's it," replied Nash heartily. "He is senior and navigating lieutenant of the Tartar. Well, lad, I'm glad to see his name here, and I shall be yet more glad to see him in person on this island. From what I've seen of you, James, I'm more than inclined to like your whole family. I hope I may have the honor of meeting every member of it some day. What d'ye say to that, lad?"

Burnham had nothing in particular to say to that; but he turned from the window, bowed low, and stammered a few words of thanks for the governor's polite and more than generous speech. His heart was like lead in his side; but there was a flush on his face which the governor mistook for a blush of pleasure and embarrassment.

"You are too modest, my lad," he said. "Or is it that you are shy? But you'll get over your shyness in time, I dare say. Oh, I've had my eye on you, Master James! But don't mind me, lad. Don't mind my jokes. Tell me about this brother of yours. How long is it since you last saw him? What does he look like?"

"It is some years since I last saw him," said Burnham. "He was at sea, a middy, when I was last at Burnham. A good lad he is, young Alexander. Did you say you expect the Tartar to arrive in twelve or fourteen days?"

"This letter is dated three days ago, and Captain Scovil says he hopes to sail in ten or twelve days," replied the governor, looking at the letter in his hand. "Your brother may be here in ten days' time."

James Burnham looked pleased; but an hour later, in the privacy of his own room, he cursed his luck long and bitterly. Here was surely the ruin of his game in Nevis. Here was the end of his dreams of reestablishing himself in the comfortable and respectable walk in life into which he had been born.

No exertions on his part could make it possible for him to marry Elizabeth Nash before the arrival of the sloop-of-war. Well, there was an end of that!

Though luck had gone against James Burnham in the larger matters of life, it had stood by him in the smaller. Deprived of honor and place and the love of his own family, yet he had escaped death at sea and hunger ashore.

Here on Nevis, cast penniless among strangers, he had not been called upon to suffer even the petty thorns of humiliation; and now, though dealt a shrewd blow in the matter of his fine plans for the future, he was left considerably better off than he had been upon landing. His health was good and his pockets were well lined. His luck at play had been phenomenal.

Now he was adrift again and pitted against his old, natural enemy, organized society. He seated himself beside an open window of his cool room and thought it all over. His mood lightened, excited by his devilish and invincible sense of humor.

He thought of Kitty Trimmer, and smiled eagerly, but unpleasantly. He had a few days of life on Nevis remaining to him, and he decided to make the most of them. He locked the door of his room, drew his money from a safe hiding-place in the bed, and counted it. Then he put it away, unlocked his door, and shouted for Henry Todd.

Henry Todd was doglike in his devotion to James Burnham. He came now, listened attentively to his master's instructions, hid twelve guineas on his person, and went away.

In the cool of the early evening Burnham strolled out upon the hills. He reached a secluded spot, a little natural nook beside the hill-path shaded by mangotrees, and waited. He did not have to wait long. He soon heard the tattoo of hoofs on the hard trail. A gray pony and its rider appeared around a green corner.

Kitty Trimmer drew rein. Burnham laid a hand on the pony's neck and regarded the young woman with glinting eyes and smiling lips. She returned the gaze for a second, then glanced hastily aside. Her small face flamed.

"I am here," she said unsteadily. "What is it you want to say to me? Be quick with it, please."

"There is no need for haste that I can see," replied James. "My dear little kit-

ten, if I did not know you as well as I do, I might think that you were sorry to be here; but in the light of the past, my sweet puss, I cannot think that. You played a trick on me that few men would forgive in a lifetime; but I have forgiven you. I was always a fool about you, my dear; and by Heaven, I still am! What d'ye think of that for constancy? But for you, my beauty, I'd be a parson now, with tithes and rents, snug in Wantage vicarage and the odor of sanctity, and with my name still intact in my father's will. That's the truth, my dear, as well you know. And here I am still a fool and ready to break myself again for you. Would Stanton do or dare as much for you? Not he!"

He caught one of her hands, and though she made a quick, brief effort to withdraw it, he held it tight. She trembled and kept her face averted.

"Percy would venture anything for me," she said. "He loves me. He will marry me, come what may of it!"

"Not he, the sluggish sot," sneered Burnham. "Marry you? It may be so; but you'll get lean cheer of that. The fellow is a coward. When his precious parents take him in hand you'll find him a rare, fine husband—a champion to be proud of. They'll strip him of the corset-maker's fortune, I tell you, the moment they get wind of the marriage. They think they can buy a daughter of some family of condition for him; and what think you they'll say when they find him held in matrimonial leash by the wench of the tailor of Wantage? Corset-maker and breeches-maker! There is too much a sameness of degree there for either one to mend the other in the eyes of the fashionable world."

Kitty's shoulders drooped and trembled with ill-suppressed sobs.

"Picture your bold Percy with empty pockets," continued Burnham heartlessly. "Picture that flabby, befuddled fool with his bread to win by his own hand and a wife to feed. Use your wits, my dear! You know him; and look at me, my kitten. If my father disowns me, do I go naked and hungry? I have been robbed at home, and again in these islands; but do you see me in rags, or slinking in side alleys, or any man's servant? Nature armed me at birth for the game of life. I see a play in these seas, my girl, that lacks nothing but

a true gamester. I shall grasp a fortune among these islands. Come back to me, Kitty! We are of the spirit that rides defeat, you and I. I was born with teeth, as some play-writer has said of some king. Come away from Nevis with me and I swear that I will make you my wife, my pretty!"

He slipped his left arm about her slender waist as she sat in the saddle.

"You must let me go," she whispered; but she neither struggled in his embrace nor urged the pony forward or aside.

Had his mind not been dulled by the heat of his blood, he would have suspected a trick of some kind; but he laughed, clasped her in both arms, and drew her tantalizing face downward and sidewise to his. The docile pony did not move. The young woman did not resist; but suddenly, turning her face a little so that Burnham's lips were upon one of her smooth cheeks, she screamed.

Then James Burnham's wits flashed awake, and he sprang back from the trail as if he had been stung. The brief tropic twilight had slipped away and the white stars were shining. Three men, afoot, rushed at him; and Kitty lashed the pony and went up the track at a hand-gallop.

Burnham was unarmed. Rage boiled in him to the verge of madness. She had tricked him again, even while his lips were upon her face!

The three gallants came at him somewhat clumsily, with more noise than agility, cutting at him wildly with heavy-thonged whips. Percy Stanton was one of them; and all three were under the influence of the mess port.

Burnham snatched up a billet which had fallen from the load of some wood-cutter and laid about him to such good purpose that the three merry gentlemen were speedily disarmed. He took Stanton by the scruff of the neck and thrashed him soundly, the other two standing by and looking on. And as Burnham plied his stick he unburdened himself of his opinion of Stanton and Kitty Trimmer.

VIII

His jealousy and hatred of James Burnham had landed Stanton in a very awkward position. Kitty had told him that Burnham had asked her to meet him at a certain spot at a certain hour. He and the girl had agreed to make a trap for Burn-

ham; and with this end in view he had brought two young brother officers along with him, armed with whips. And now these friends of his, suddenly become more or less sober, agreed with Burnham that the only possible thing for Stanton to do, as an officer and a gentleman, was to fight.

"Confound you, Percy," said one of them, "you brought us on a mission that no gentleman should share with another! I'm beginning to think that you and the lady laid a trap for Mr. Burnham. Why didn't she scream sooner, else? For I'll swear she let him kiss her without a struggle. However that may be, he has dusted your coat for you with a stick, and you must have his blood for it—or spill a little of your own—for the honor of the regiment and of their majesties' uniform."

"Nothing else to be done, I assure you," said Captain Cross. "If you don't fight Mr. Burnham, my boy, you must fight me for taking advantage of me when in my cups and drawing me into a purely private affair. I'm not this gentleman's guardian. If he wants to kiss a lady in whom you are interested, that is his concern—and yours and the lady's."

"If you are armed," said Mr. Throgmorton, "the little affair might be settled here and now. But I see that you are not armed. Very good! Some one will have to return to barracks for weapons and a lantern."

"One moment, gentlemen, if you please," said James Burnham. "I have a suspicion that Mr. Stanton is not in such haste to deal with me but that he is willing to wait a few hours. A bath and a few hours of sleep on his part would put us on a more equal footing. What say you? Cannot we arrange for a meeting at dawn, on the sands at the cold spring? There is a secluded spot, with footing as level as a floor. As to weapons—but who is the challenger?"

"This is very handsome of you, sir," said Captain Cross. "At dawn to-morrow let it be. Throgmorton and I will arrange the details. Stanton is the challenger, of course. Will you be so kind as to name the weapons, sir?"

"I have contended against you gentlemen, all three of you, in friendly shooting-matches," said Burnham. "You all know what I can do with a pistol."

"We do," said Mr. Throgmorton. "The knowledge cost me twenty guineas in bets,

if I remember rightly. You are the best shot I have ever seen. You name pistols, then?"

"No," replied Burnham. "I name swords."

"Very handsome of you!" exclaimed Cross and Throgmorton.

Stanton said nothing. He was a good swordsman, but he had no stomach for bloodshed.

James Burnham returned to Government House with an indescribable bitterness pinching his heart. Even the prospect of a fight could not lighten his mood just then.

Kitty had betrayed him again; Kitty had escaped him again. He had never demanded virtue of her, as virtue is understood by the respectable, but he had always given her credit for a sort of rogues' honesty. He hated her now; but he knew that the hatred would not last.

He found Henry Todd waiting for him in his room. He locked the door, threw aside his hat and skirted coat, and sank into a deep chair beside an open window. One candle burned in a sheltered corner.

"I got the boat, sir," said Henry Todd. "What next, cap'n?"

"I believe you still take me for a pirate," said Burnham.

"No, sir," replied the lad. "Leastwise, I take yer honor for whatever ye want to name yerself; but I have heard it said as how a fine gentleman makes a brisker pirate nor any common sailorman."

An hour later Todd took his departure by way of the window. Mr. Burnham let a small, heavy box down to him on the end of a strong cord, and next let down a bulky leather bag.

Todd, with the bag under his left arm and the box in his right hand, vanished among the garden shrubberies, and Burnham went to his desk at the back of the room and lit another candle. He spread out a few sheets of paper and trimmed a quill. He filled a pipe and lit it at the flame of the candle. His mind turned from Kitty Trimmer to Elizabeth Nash.

James Burnham wrote a letter of farewell to the governor's daughter. The morning might see his death; at the best it would find him an outcast again, with disgrace behind him and hardships and danger in front; but he smiled and dipped his pen and applied himself to the art of words with an undivided mind.

He wrote, crossed out, and rewrote. He gnawed his pen and sighed. To any one looking in at the window he might have been mistaken for some utterly love-sick, half-inspired poet penning a sonnet to Diana or the stars. At last he made a clean copy of his composition—and here it is:

MY SWEET AND HONORED AND INCOMPARABLE
LADY:

Greeting—and farewell. I go to-morrow from this earthly paradise. I pray that I go to my death; for how, save by death, am I to forget? You will know something of my reason for flight—or death—to-morrow; and you will learn more from my brother.

But the true cause of my despair and flight has nothing to do with the result of wine-bred anger or youthful folly. Despair chills me, grief consumes me; for I know that I can never win your love. I might aspire to your tender pity and sweet friendship—but something deep in my heart tells me that only a good man can ever claim your love.

I make no claim to virtue; but in return for your sweet pity I give you my torn heart's homage. If I live beyond the morrow, I shall ever keep sacred and bright the memories of these days during which I have walked at one and the same time in heaven and in a fool's paradise. I shall never cease to thank God that I was permitted to be of slight service to you once; and death itself shall not wrest from me the dear cadences of your voice and the tender caresses of your pure eyes.

That God may shield and prosper you, and keep your dear heart tender toward the homeless and friendless, is the prayer of your loving and humble servant.

JAMES BURNHAM.

It was not a long letter; but he had given an hour to the writing of it. He read it over with a smile, sealed it, and inscribed it to Miss Elizabeth Nash. For a second or two he felt almost as if the thing he had written was the truth.

"That is what it is to be a poet," he said. "You can make yourself believe anything—for a little while!"

Then he laughed, undressed, and retired.

Before the sun was above the eastern sea five men gathered on the sand beside the cold spring, at the roots of the white-wood trees, by the gentle beat and seethe of the soft-footed surf. The east was aflame with clearest gold and rose; above that the pale-green of twilight; westward of that again a few paling stars.

The breathing sea lay half in shadow, half in fire. Birds awoke and twittered

in the thickets of sea-grape and white-wood. The air was cool and a little breeze fanned in from the vast salt acres.

The five men stood close together for a moment or two and exchanged a few words; then Stanton withdrew a few paces to the left and James Burnham to the right. Young Mr. Willis, the surgeon, had brought a case containing bandages, surgical needles, and stimulants. Captain Cross carried a bundle under one arm. He threw it down, unrolled it, and disclosed two straight rapiers to the clean radiance of the new day.

Mr. Throgmorton examined the swords, weighing them one against the other, shaking them until the long blades flickered. He measured them, holding them hilt to hilt.

"As like as two peas," he said.

Captain Cross paced about on the sand, staring down at it and testing it with shuffling, stamping feet. The lieutenant followed him. At last the captain seemed satisfied and, after a word with Throgmorton, he went over to where James Burnham stood staring seaward with an emotionless face. He raised his hat in grim and formal salute, and Burnham replied in kind. He presented one of the rapiers, hilt to the front.

"Your sword, sir," he said. "I have assured myself that it is a dependable weapon. If you will take your ground now, Mr. Burnham, we will get along with this little affair. The light is not bad and the footing is admirable."

James Burnham bowed again, then let his hat fall to the sand. He did not so much as glance at the sword in his hand, but tucked it under his left arm and walked steadily to the spot selected by the seconds for the combat. He took his ground with his right shoulder to the flaming east.

As Stanton was not yet ready, he dropped the point of his sword to the toe of his buckled shoe, folded his hands lightly on the hilt, and glanced idly around him. His face was like a mask and his eyes were cool, and yet in his heart the lust of blood seethed and bubbled.

Coatless and hatless, clothed only in a thin white shirt and blue breeches, narrow of flank, deep of chest, straight of back, he cut a fine figure. His hair was simply tied and lightly powdered. His right arm was naked almost to the shoulder, show-

ing a skin as white as milk above the brown wrist and the curves and flickerings of long, lean muscles.

Stanton took his ground, under the direction of Throgmorton, with his left shoulder to the east. As they stood, the light was to neither's advantage.

Stanton also was stripped to shirt and breeches. He was a straight, heavily built young man, an inch taller than James Burnham, and perhaps more than an inch longer in the arm. His waist was thick, his hips large, his thighs and flanks round. His fine chest and shoulders were a trifle too heavy.

He was certainly not in the pink of condition, although youth and a strong constitution still did much to make good the wear and tear of deep cups and long hours. His big, naked sword-arm was red. His face was white. But theoretically, at least, he was the best swordsman in his regiment.

At a word from Captain Cross Burnham and Stanton saluted each other with their swords. Next instant the blades struck with a tinkle. The morning light caught the trembling points and flickered there like fire.

The blades stood motionless, as if welded together; but the muscles of the naked arms rippled and twitched. Wrists were being tested. The two men stood eye to eye. Their feet began to shift position a little on the firm sand.

Stanton lowered his point suddenly and thrust. His point caught, for a fraction of a second, in the fold of linen between Burnham's shoulder and elbow, and he was forced to recover with a jump. Burnham smiled slightly.

And now the fighters began to stamp and side-step, stand poised, advance a little, retire a little, like dancing-masters; and the slender blades struck and glanced and writhed the one upon the other, and the silver guards tinkled more than once.

The sun came clean out of the sea with a face of colorless fire and struck his white glare fairly into Burnham's eyes. The heavy but artful Stanton had worked around to the position he wanted. Yet Burnham seemed undismayed. He turned a thrust aside with ease and composure. His eyes did not narrow or flinch before the full glare of the sun; at least, the lids did not move, though the pupils contracted to pin-points.

Stanton breathed heavily and struck heavily to beat in the other's guard. The seconds began to feel the strain upon their nerves. Willis gazed seaward, his thin, kindly young face as white as his shirt.

Stanton's brow, cheeks, and throat glistened with sweat. The sun was at his back and full in his enemy's eyes. The next thrust would end it. He put forth all the strength of wrist and shoulder to press aside that slender barrier. He had the fellow at his mercy.

The pressure began to tell on the other's blade. He uttered a gusty sigh through parted lips, lowered his point, and lunged as quick as light.

And then it happened, so swiftly that none could see the way of it. Stanton, struck in the very moment of victory, sank to the sand and the red blood leaped out upon the white linen on his breast. Burnham stood motionless, with the red point of his sword in the lilac sand.

"I intended to run him through the shoulder; but the light was in my eyes," he said. "I have not given him his death-wound, I trust."

Willis fell on his knees beside the wounded man and set to work with his bandages. Throgmorton shuddered, turned away, and brushed a square of perfumed lace across his dripping face. Captain Cross went over to Burnham and extended his hand.

"Death-wound or no, your conscience is clean in this matter," he said. "You could not have escaped the meeting with honor. Stanton is a skilled swordsman and fought to kill; and no one will deny that the sun was fair in your eyes, and every advantage to Stanton, when you pinked him. But you'll have to get away and lie low for a while, at least—until the result is known. It's a confounded shame, but I fear that it is so, nevertheless. What are your plans? What can I do for you? Have you any money for your immediate needs?"

"You are very kind," replied James. "I have a little money and can make shift, I think. Captain Nash will give me a few days of grace in which to get away from the island, even if Stanton should die before night. It was a fair fight, and one which I could not avoid. Don't worry about me, sir. I'll rest here for a little while. I meant to wing him, but the sun was in my eyes."

They carried Stanton away, still breathing and still bleeding, and James Burnham was left alone. He still held the sword with which he had wounded Stanton and of which Captain Cross had forgotten to relieve him.

As Burnham stood there gripping his bloody sword, a look of exultation swept his face like a sudden fire. He turned, picked up his hat and cloak, and moved briskly along the beach, but not in the direction which led to the town. He cast a cool and calculating glance at the burnished sea and the clear, glowing sky. He rounded a point and beheld a fishing-boat riding at anchor in a little cove and the trusty Todd pacing the sand with a cutlas on his hip and a musket on his shoulder.

"All's ready, sir," said Todd, his eyes fixed in a fascinated stare upon the naked blade in his master's right hand. He saw that the sheen of the polished metal was dimmed at the point. "Water an' victuals, bag an' box, all safe aboard, cap'n. Did yer honor kill the military gentleman, might I make so bold as to ask?"

"He may recover, though I doubt it," answered Burnham with a grin. "But however that may be, my lad, our sheltered and full-fed days in this tight little isle have come to an end. I was sickening of it, anyhow. We must take the world by the windpipe again and pinch a living out of it whether it is willing or no."

The fight and the spilling of blood had put Burnham in a good humor and Kitty Trimmer out of his mind. He waded out to the boat, with Henry Todd at his heels. He found everything there, even as Todd had said—the box, the leather bag, a breaker of water, fruit, and a bag of bread. They hoisted themselves aboard, stepped the short mast, and pulled up the little anchor. Then Todd unslung the heavy cutlas from his waist and turned the boat's nose to seaward with the oars.

Percy Stanton was carried to his quarters by secluded paths and finally laid upon his bed. Here Willis examined the wound again, washed it, applied a compress and fresh bandages. The captain and Throgmorton then left the room, and Willis sat alone with the wounded duelist until Dr. Hamm, the regimental surgeon, entered the room on tiptoe, with a fat finger pressed archly on a fat lower lip. He closed the door behind him and turned the key in the lock.

"A pretty fight, Cross tells me," he whispered, advancing and gazing down curiously and with considerable relish at Stanton. "I didn't think Percy had the pluck, and that's a fact. Alive, stap me if he isn't—and bleeding nicely! He'll recover, unless the fever gets him or the blood turns and drains inward. With luck, he'll pull through; for he has the constitution of an ox. A few weeks spent in bed, on the flat of his back, will do him no harm. I'll report to the colonel that he was injured by a throw from his horse, but well I can remember the days when little accidents of this kind did not have to be hidden under a bushel. We're becoming too nice in our morals, Willis. I've been out myself. Bless your soul, yes—three times in all, and killed my man once. Men were men in those days, and not a pack of old ladies. I've seen a parson go out in the dawning with his own churchwarden and wing him as neat as you please at twenty paces. I have a hole in my own chest here that would astonish you could you see it. So it was a good fight, was it? Wish I had been there, stap me if I don't!"

"It was a close fight, sir," replied Willis. "Stanton seemed to have the advantage up to the very moment of falling. The sun shone full into Burnham's eyes."

"I could have told you how it would end," said Dr. Hamm. "Did you think for a moment that this hulk had any chance against a son of old Walter Burnham, of Burnham? They are of a fighting strain, the Burnhams, with a dash of the fiend in it. And where is Burnham now? I trust that he'll not be fool enough to run away. No need of it, even if Percy goes out. All that the authorities need ever hear of it is that the young sot fell from his horse."

"I don't know what Burnham intends to do," replied Willis. "We left him on the beach, poor fellow. He meant only to wing Stanton."

IX

CAPTAIN ALGERNON NASH, governor of Nevis, was accustomed to doing all his official business for the day in the cool of the morning, between the hours of seven and ten. Recently he had come to depend more than he knew upon the help and society of James Burnham during these hours.

On this particular morning he sat alone until close upon eight o'clock, idle and ex-

pectant, then sent a servant to Mr. Burnham's room. The man returned with the information that the room was empty, and with a sealed letter in his hand addressed to Miss Nash. The letter was delivered to Elizabeth and people were sent here and there through the house and grounds in search of Burnham.

Mr. Willis, who had returned from Stanton's quarters, admitted that he had seen James Burnham early that morning; and a few pressing questions brought forth the story of the duel. The governor swore violently and despatched a party of men to the wooded hills. Then he went to his daughter.

The governor found Elizabeth with tears in her eyes and on her cheeks and the open letter in her hand.

"Where is he hiding himself?" demanded Captain Nash. "What's the matter with the young fool? Does he think I would hang him for fighting a duel, or even for killing his man in fair fight? And I've heard about the fight. What does he tell you there?"

"He has gone away," replied Elizabeth in shaking tones. "He is in some trouble, I think. He has left the island by now, I fear me. Was he wounded? And with whom did he fight?"

"He wasn't touched. He pinked Stanton very neatly, though the sun was in his eyes. Did they quarrel about you? What has he written to you?"

The girl handed the open paper to him and sank her face between her hands. The governor read slowly, his lips moving over each word in a kind of breathing half-whisper, like a child at its book. His brows puckered as he read; his hand trembled; his cheeks paled.

"If he loves you like this, why didn't he tell us so?" he exploded. "Youthful follies! Let them be regretted and forgotten. Like enough I was a fool myself once. And you loved him?"

"I—I do not know," sobbed Elizabeth. "I think so—and again I am not sure. He was brave and kind. He saved my life; but I do not know whether or not I loved him as he loves me!"

"A queer thing," said the governor, "a mighty queer thing!"

James Burnham and Henry Todd crossed the narrow seaway between Nevis and the southern point of St. Kitts, round-

ed the cape, and sailed slowly along the eastern coast of the larger island. Tides of green foliage descended the rounded hills to the narrow, winding strip of sand. The seas, pale-green in the shallows, sparkled into the sand and fell upon it in thin, white froth. The wind was light.

Burnham tended sheet and tiller and Henry Todd crouched in the bows and scanned the coast. Burnham, too, kept a sharp eye on the coast and the climbing hills. Perhaps he looked for the gray roofs of a village, or for some sign of cultivated land. It is likely enough that he was content to look out for whatever chance might show; that he expected nothing—or anything. He was waiting for his opponent's throw—and Fate was his opponent. In the mean time he tended sheet and tiller, scanned the near coast, and smoked his pipe.

His mind went back calmly and pleasantly to the duel with Stanton. He went over it from the courtly beginning to the desperate finish, point by point, and was satisfied absolutely with it. He had taken a slight risk, perhaps, when he let himself take the sun in his eyes; but the artistic conclusion of the affair was well worth the risk. He was becoming nicer in his methods as he grew older and took the measure of the world against which he played.

He thought of Kitty. Well, he had taught her a lesson; he had shown her what manner of straw man she was clinging to; and some day he would make a point of teaching her still more of the error of her ways.

The sun climbed high. The narrow beach unwound before them, and deep, untenanted valleys opened to their gaze. Suddenly a boat propelled by four oars shot into the sea ahead of them from behind a little green point.

Henry Todd shouted. Burnham swore and swung the boat's head up to the wind; but the other craft shot across her bows and a man in the stern stood up with a musket in his hands.

"This is no time to burn powder," said Burnham. "They are ten to two, and they have the wind of us. We'll just fall away on our old course and let them come alongside and explain what they want. If they want trouble, we can start it then as well as now."

The boat with the four oars swung and

approached. The man with the musket in the crook of his left arm shouted to Todd to lower the sail.

"Lower away," ordered Burnham.

The other craft was a ship's long-boat. She contained eleven men, including the four at the oars, and the sunshine struck upon polished metal aboard her in many points of fire. She drew swiftly down upon the fishing-boat. The features of the man with the musket grew clear to the gaze of the fugitives. James Burnham uttered an astonished oath.

"'Tis John Trimmer!" he exclaimed. "John Trimmer of Wantage, as I live! The highwayman, the breeches-maker's son, Kitty's brother!"

The man with the musket bowed and flourished his hat. He grinned.

"Welcome to the narrow seas, Master James Burnham!" he cried.

Burnham got to his feet and returned the salutation in silence. His face showed no more emotion than a wooden mask; but his keen eyes flickered over Trimmer and his company, and his mind jumped to the true and amazing conclusion that John Trimmer had escaped the clutch of the law and was now taking toll of the seas as he had taken toll of the roads.

There was no mistaking the calling of the fellows in the long-boat. Again his glance flickered over those hardy and villainous faces. Even the rowers had twisted around on the thwarts and were staring at him. He felt a glow of admiration for John Trimmer.

The rowers threw their oars inboard and the boats touched and lay gunwale to gunwale. James Burnham smiled, stepped lightly from the fishing-boat into the crowded long-boat, and extended his hand to John Trimmer. He was unarmed.

"Well met, John Trimmer!" he said heartily. "Good morning to you, my brave lads all. Jack and I are boyhood friends. Jack, you must tell me how you managed this—for, on my soul, I had small expectations of meeting you thus, your own master again and with ten sturdy seamen at your back. I congratulate you, Jack!"

John Trimmer looked pleased. He was as vain as a pretty girl in spite of his ruthless strength, and it delighted him to have a Burnham of Burnham—even an outcast Burnham—greet him with such evident admiration and warmth. He grasped the offered hand cordially.

"Story for story, Jim," he said. "But, first of all, what are you about now, cruising along this coast with one companion? And where d'ye hail from last? Are ye looking for any one in particular, by any chance?"

"To be quite frank with you, I'm a fugitive from Nevis, where I have been living of late as a gentleman of blameless reputation and good prospects," answered Burnham, smiling down at the hard-bit faces turned up to him curiously and suspiciously. "But Alexander is expected at Nevis in a few days, aboard the sloop-of-war Tartar," he continued; "so I thought it wiser to slip away. I am in disgrace with my family, you know. The fact is, my dear father disowned me and shipped me off to Kingston. I've had some adventures since then. This very morning, before leaving Nevis, I fought a duel with a military gentleman—his last affair, I think."

Trimmer nodded to his companions and spoke a few low words of command. Four of his fellows stepped into Burnham's boat and took up the oars. Henry Todd sprang to his feet.

"Stay where you are, my lad," said Burnham. "You are among friends."

He sat down calmly beside John Trimmer in the stern-sheets of the long-boat, and both boats pulled northward up the coast, side by side. They were run ashore some fifty yards to the south of the green point from behind which the long-boat had first appeared. The boats were beached and all hands crossed the strip of sand to the shade of the wood.

Trimmer and his company drew aside from Burnham and Henry Todd and talked together in low voices for several minutes. Trimmer spoke as one with authority. Twice he slammed his right fist into his left palm. As he talked, there was much nodding of heads and squirting of tobacco-juice.

Then Trimmer turned and beckoned to Henry Todd to approach. Henry obeyed, but with quaking knees. Burnham could see that they were questioning Todd; and he smiled, produced his pipe, filled it, and lit it. His hands did not tremble in the somewhat trying task of striking a light with his flint.

Trimmer came over to Burnham's side and stood silent for a moment, gazing down at him.

"What are your prospects, Jim?" he asked.

Burnham laughed.

"I have seventy guineas in the little box there," he said. "I cannot go back to Nevis; and if I ever return to England my own father will hand me over to the law for a highwayman. Something went wrong with a certain ring which you gave me, Jack."

"Would you care to join my company?" asked Trimmer. "We need men of your kidney; and for your sake we are willing to take this lad Todd, though he doesn't look much like a—well, a gentleman of fortune."

"Gladly!" cried Burnham, rising to his feet and grinning at the tailor's son. "I accept your offer with gratitude, and so spare you the unpleasant duty of naming the alternative course for me."

Trimmer laughed uproariously and slapped the other's shoulder.

The white schooner lay in a deep, narrow pocket hemmed in by tangled forests. The entrance to this haven was not more than twenty yards across, but it widened within to a width of close upon eighty yards. Here was sea-room in which to swing the schooner around with the help of the boats. She lay now at the back of the basin, with her nose toward the entrance, moored by two lines. Awnings of old sails shaded the decks.

Trimmer showed Burnham over the schooner, then told his story. He had slipped his shackles, freed his companions in misery, and overpowered the officers and crew of the brig Good Cheer, as we know. The life of the third mate had been spared because none of the jailbirds knew navigation.

The brig made heavy weather throughout the week immediately following her change of masters. A score of the miserable beings sickened and died and were thrown into the sea. The survivors of the desperate and deplorable company elected John Trimmer to the post of captain; Dodd, another ex-highwayman, to the berth of first mate; and a pickpocket called Slim Sam to the honorable position of second officer. The former third mate kept his old berth and performed all the duties of navigating and sailing the brig.

In the course of time a signal of distress brought a schooner from New England alongside the Good Cheer. Trimmer

hid all his armed men save six, then informed the master of the schooner that he had escaped from a pirate only to be knocked about by a gale, and that he was now short of men, fresh water, and provisions. The New Englanders came aboard the brig in a hurry, doubtless to ascertain the nature of the cargo with a view to confiscating it. Otherwise, why did they come armed and to the number of twenty?

However that may be, Captain Trimmer's fellows made short and bloody work of them. The schooner, left short-handed, attempted to escape at the first outcry of the conflict; but Trimmer had foreseen this, and had the brig's three guns ready trained on the schooner's spars behind a screen of empty casks. So the schooner's wings were crippled; and later she was overhauled. Captain Trimmer, and what remained of his villainous company, transferred themselves from the brig to the schooner, together with everything of value in the brig.

A few weeks later Trimmer had been fortunate enough to encounter a large merchant-ship at the moment of mutiny. He boarded and joined the fight when the victory was hanging in the balance and both sides were weak and exhausted. He overpowered both the contending parties with great slaughter, recruited from the pick of the survivors, then looted and scuttled the ship. She proved a rich prize.

Two weeks later he had an opportunity to careen and scrape his schooner and to paint her. He painted out the vessel's original name and, for luck, let her go without a name. And this whim had proved lucky. He had taken many ships and lost nothing more valuable than a score or so of his men.

"She is called the Wasp," said Burnham. "A good name for her, from the point of view of the fools she stings!"

"There's no luck in a name," replied Trimmer doggedly, "so don't you give her one, Jim. Now tell me what deviltries fetched you to these parts. Pass the rum and the water-monkey first."

The white schooner continued to lie in the hidden basin until the morning of the third day after James Burnham's fight with Percy Stanton. Seamen posted in treetops on the surrounding hills kept a sharp and wide lookout. Burnham devoted these days to a close study of the nameless schooner's company; and though

Trimmer offered him a berth aft, he chose to sleep in the forecabin and rate himself as an able seaman.

Discipline was slack. The afterguard, as well as the crew, had changed considerably since the first election of leaders. Men had died violent deaths and new men had been recruited. Dodd, one-time first mate, had died of a cutlass-wound and gone to the fishes. Slim Sam, the ex-pickpocket, was now second in command. Wells, who had been third mate of the Good Cheer, still acted as sailing-master.

This Wells was a quiet man with a high brow and a weak chin. No amount of pistols thrust in his belt could make him look like a pirate. The boatswain and the chief gunner were sailors, not jailbirds—and yet, by their faces and the stories they told, one knew them to be ripe for the gallows.

The quartermaster was also a sailor; but about fifty per cent of the hands represented Newgate and the original company. All told, the schooner's company now numbered forty-six.

Burnham studied these new associates of his with interest, and was amused to note how little they differed, save in profession and manners, from other societies in which he had mixed—from the gentry of Berkshire, the hell-rakes of London, and the officials and planters of Nevis.

Trimmer himself looked like an honest and kindly yeoman, except when his anger was aroused or his vanity wounded. His face was square, his skin rough and ruddy, his head round as a bullet. He was by nature merry of spirit and of sturdy constitution; and the bloodshed and hard, high living of his calling had not yet impaired either his humor or his health. Ashore in populous ports he was an untiring singer in taverns, a great pincher of feminine cheeks and chucker of feminine chins.

Slim Sam suggested to Burnham's mind a priest in a hair shirt, so narrow was his face, so inbrooding his dark eyes, so modest his manner and quiet his voice. He wore no bright colors, he cropped his hair, he drank only the thinnest of wines. He was never seen with a weapon except when actually in action. He never raised his voice in argument, laughter, or anger. He impressed James Burnham as being a person worthy of particular study.

Burnham did not mention Kitty's pres-

ence in Nevis to her brother. He thought it wiser not to mix family and business affairs.

The white schooner left Bottle Harbor at dawn, sailed south and east until noon, and then headed due south. She was a clever sailor and could make the most of light and uncertain airs. Wells handled her with skill.

James Burnham was in Slim Sam's watch. He worked willingly, but the tasks that day were as light as the currents of air. When there was no work to be done aloft or alow, the men of the watch sat down in whatever patch of shade took their fancy and smoked and yarned or even played at cards or dice.

Most of them had coin, and those who had no coin had trinkets or silks. It seems that Captain Trimmer's method of doing business was to declare dividends after every capture and pass every man's share of the spoils over to him. The schooner counted as five men, and so took five shares, the resultant fund being devoted to her upkeep. The captain took three shares to himself; all other officers, no matter of what grade, two shares each; and able-bodied members of the crew, including the two cooks, got one share each. There were three lads who only drew half-shares.

They never robbed one another, save through the medium of cards or dice. They left their treasure lying in unlocked chests, in open bags, or even loose in their berths. Play was high and drinking was heavy; but if a man became unduly troublesome in his cups or dangerously excited over the play, he was promptly brought to order.

During the first two days out from Bottle Harbor James Burnham lost fifty of his seventy guineas at play. Early on the third day a flashing white sail was sighted to the westward. Captain Trimmer went aloft and examined it through his glass.

He reported a large sloop, a single-sticker with a cloud of head-sails, southward bound. Beyond a doubt it was the Tartar heading for Nevis; so the white schooner held on her way.

The bright day wore on to a red sunset and a star-spangled night. Burnham dined for a couple of hours in the cabin with Trimmer and Wells and won ten guineas. He then left the cabin and made himself a bed of sorts of an old sail on the deck.

He lay in the starboard scuppers, amidstships, in the shadow of the bulwarks.

X

JAMES BURNHAM slept soundly until trodden upon by a bare but heavy foot. He was upright in the scuppers, with his back against the bulwarks and a knife in his hand, almost before his eyes were open. The man who had stepped on him recoiled with a startled oath. Burnham sheathed his knife even more swiftly than he had drawn it.

"Hark!" cautioned the other. "D'y'e hear it? Musketry. And I'll swear I saw a light but a moment before I trod on ye."

A mist had blown in between the sea and the stars while Burnham slept. The schooner rolled lazily, with scarce more than steerageway on her. The wind sagged, puffed with an effort, sagged and puffed again.

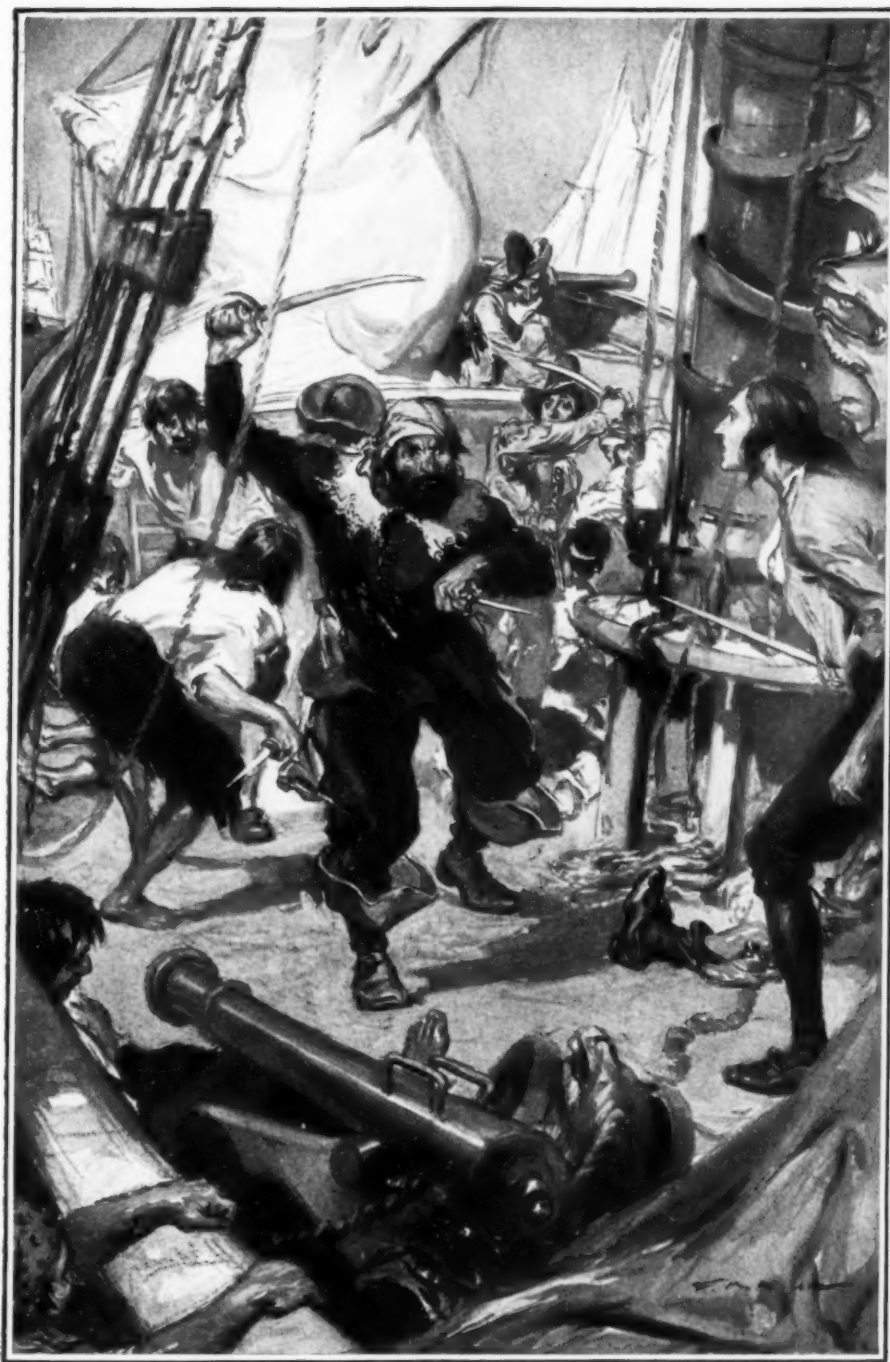
Burnham gazed to starboard and listened, with his shoulder to the man who had awakened him. He could see nothing but the gray blackness that filled the sky and shrouded the sea. He heard the indolent, hollow flap of an empty head-sail, the whispering effort of the big mainsail trying to hold the elusive breeze, the patter of reef-points, and the spatter and sob of the little seas along the side. He heard the fellow at his shoulder breathing heavily and smelled the reek of his pipe.

He strained ears and eyes against the dark and distance. And then he caught it—the ghost of echoes; and for a fraction of a second his eyes seemed to grasp a spot of red in the gloom.

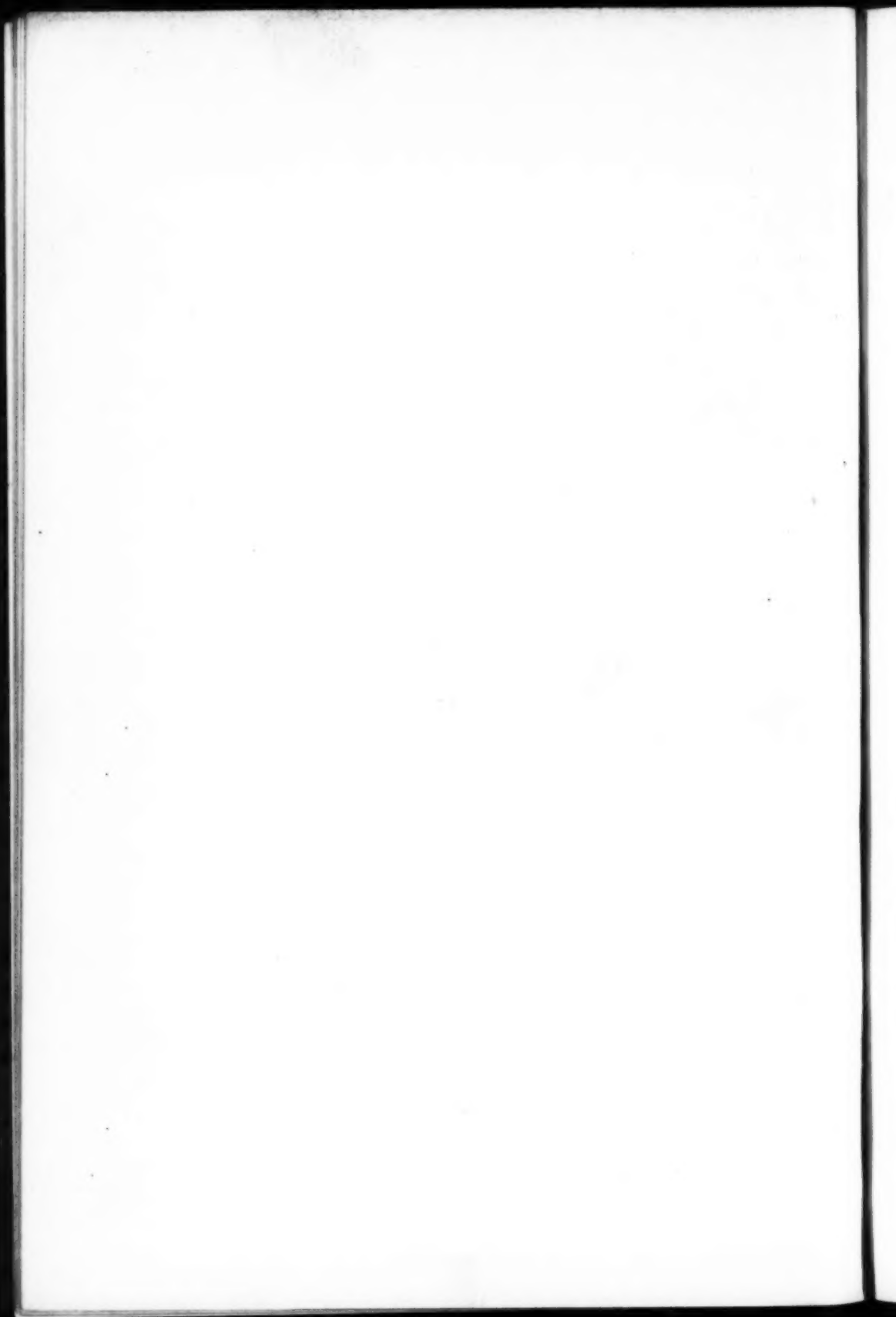
"There!" said the other. "Small arms! I'll report it to the cap'n."

Burnham remained with his hands on the great teakwood rail and watched and listened for another sight or sound of the thing. He caught the muffled, rapping ghost of sound again. His blood quickened. Fighting was going on out there in the sea gloom beyond a doubt. Perhaps two ships lay side to side, held by the gripping irons, with blood already spilling on deck and rail, with dead men in the scuppers and wounded men crawling to the shelter of mast and companionway.

An English ship and a French ship might be out there, fastened in the death-grip; but he thought it more likely that some craft of their own kidney had fastened upon a trader. Ships of war, with



BURNHAM DID NOT KNOW THE SHORT, HEAVY-SET FELLOW WITH THE BLACK BEARD AND THE BRANDISHED CUTLAS FOR THE REDOUBTABLE PIRATE



their heavy metal, would have kept up a discharge of big guns even after they had grappled.

The course of the white schooner was altered. She moved through the gloom with steerageway and no more, rolling lazily. She showed no lights. Men gathered in groups in the waist, on the fore-castle deck, on the poop.

An hour passed with only one more whisper of the muffled sounds to leeward; and then night's lid lifted a hair's breadth in the east. The wind freshened. Captain Trimmer came to James Burnham's elbow and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Something was going on, Jim," he said. "If our luck holds, we'll find pickings of some kind, and maybe a fight. How d'ye feel for a fight?"

"I'd give the last of my few guineas for a chance to draw and have at something!" replied Burnham.

Trimmer's hand lifted from the other's shoulder and pointed into the gray ahead. He uttered a volley of oaths which, though they fairly blistered the air, were intended to express satisfaction and astonishment. Burnham peered in the direction indicated and saw a something, a vague shape, in the gloom of sea and sky.

"A schooner!" exclaimed the captain. "And crippled, too! Beaten off, as I live! Then where's the trader? There she lays; d'ye see her? Both crippled. And here are we, Master Burnham, to reap the harvest, like the good farmers we are. Blister me, it's a case I've dreamed of, but never hoped to see! And who'll it be, now? Hellfire Hicks, d'ye think? I'll tell ye in two or three minutes. The light grows fast."

He slapped Burnham on the back and hurried aft in high spirits.

The light flooded swiftly out of the east, and James Burnham saw two vessels rocking on the little gray seas not half a mile away from the schooner and within two hundred yards of each other. One could see at a glance that they were lame ducks, although most of their spars were standing.

One was a long, low schooner, the other a short, high brig. The schooner had lost her maintop, the wreckage of which still cluttered her deck. She had a sharp list to larboard and seemed to be short-handed. The brig had lost a few yards and was down by the head.

Orders were shouted aboard the white schooner. Men raced along the deck with glowing faces and hair-raising jokes. It was said by some one that the crippled schooner was Hellfire Hicks's Black Polly. Guns were uncovered and manned by their crews. Pistols and cutlasses and pikes were brought from below.

The cripples showed feeble but anxious signs of life. Head-sails were run up on the listed schooner, and the heavy-headed brig made a patch or two of sail and moved sluggishly before the wind. The men of the white schooner laughed at the brig's efforts to escape, set their curved hands to their mouths, and bellowed words of ironic encouragement and advice across the brightening sea.

"She'll sail to the bottom on that course," said one. "Hope she don't dive afore we pick her bones!"

James Burnham strapped a cutlas about his waist and brought from his berth in the fore-castle the long, straight blade with which he had wounded Stanton on the sands of Nevis. He felt a lust for conflict and a thirst for blood untouched by any sense of remorse, pity, or compunction. The world was against him, his own people were against him, and fate itself—God or the gods—had struck at his life; so he was against them all.

He was for James Burnham the dis-owned and outcast, with only his head and his hands to befriend him. But he felt no more pity for himself than for the poor fools aboard the brig or the desperate rogues on the crippled schooner.

He did not think of his mother's gray hairs, of his father's pride, of Elizabeth Nash, or even of Kitty Trimmer. He gave no thought to the past or to the distant future, but waited with tingling blood and glinting eyes for the devil's dance of combat to commence.

The day flooded clean and clear from east to west. The wind held steady, but light. The white schooner raced down upon the black schooner, leaving the brig to stagger off on a long slant to the westward. Both the crippled vessels were in easy and deadly range of Trimmer's guns, but no shot was fired.

"That's the Black Polly," said Trimmer to Burnham. "Hicks told a girl in La Guayra that he'd chase me off these seas inside the year. I wonder if he's rememberin' it now—if he's alive. We'll waste no

powder on 'em, Jim. They've smashed each other to a finish, d'ye see, at long range, at short range, an' then rail to rail; and all that's left for us to do is to pick 'em up, one at a time, and gut 'em. Hicks got the wrong sow by the ear when he laid hold o' that brig. They've unshipped each other's big guns, burned all their powder, an' cut each other's throats. I think I'll send off the boats. That'll be quicker than layin' her alongside."

The white schooner hauled abreast of the black schooner. Three of the Wasp's boats were swung out; and the men who sprang into them while they still hung higher than the bulwarks could see all the tragedy and helplessness of the Black Polly's listed decks. They saw blood and corpses and two overturned cannon, a living man at the wheel under the break of the poop, and three crouching men, armed and alive, among the huddled and prostrate dead.

The Black Polly changed her course and moved sluggishly off across the wind. James Burnham, standing upright in one of the suspended boats, could see the sweat gleam on the face and arms of the fellow who wrestled with the Polly's wheel.

"Can ye drop me their helmsman, Jim?" asked Trimmer from the poop.

Burnham nodded, and extended his hand toward one of his companions in the swinging boat. A heavy pistol was placed in his fingers. He looked across at the other schooner, raised his arm, and fired. The fellow at the Polly's wheel slipped to the deck with a scream and the Polly fell sluggishly back to her old course before the wind.

The three boats were lowered and pulled briskly away. The quartermaster's boat sprang into the lead and drew away from the others. James Burnham crouched in the bow of the second boat, sword in hand. All three pulled straight for the wounded vessel's larboard side.

At the instant of the quartermaster's boat touching the Black Polly's side Burnham, in the bows of the second boat, was not twenty feet away. He saw something black and red appear above the schooner's rail and fall, with a crash, into the quartermaster's boat. There were enough live pirates on the Black Polly to prepare and drop an explosive!

The crippled schooner rolled heavily, and, for a second or two, everything—

water, men, oars, and boat, seemed to leap heavenward. A flopping shape fell within a yard of Burnham's head and plunged into the torn sea.

Burnham's boat drove onward across some flimsy, sinking wreckage; and he jumped through the clinging smoke of the explosion to the Polly's shattered rail. As he leaped from the rail to the deck he drove his slender blade into a blackened breast that confronted him, wrenched it free, and sprang clear of the smoke.

Hicks's big guns had been overturned, his schooner riddled, his rogues cut to pieces when repulsed by the heroic brig; but still he had sixteen living men instead of three. It seemed to the boarders that corpses sprang from the scuppers, armed and alive, and that wounded men lay prone and slashed with knives and cutlasses. The scattered battle eddied up and down and across the slippery, slanted deck. It was fought out in pairs and groups, blade to blade, toe to toe.

Owing to the loss of the quartermaster's boat and its entire company, the boarders did not outnumber the defenders by more than two or three; but Trimmer's men were fresh. To offset the freshness of the invaders, Hellfire Hicks himself was alive and practically unhurt.

Trimmer sailed once around the scene of action, cursing at the trick that had been played on him; and then, evidently satisfied in his mind that his men had the upper hand, he swung the Wasp's stern to the conflict and set off in pursuit of the brig. Some of the Polly's uninvited guests cursed like fiends upon seeing that their captain did not intend to send another boat to their help; but they fought all the more furiously for this knowledge.

James Burnham gave no thought to anything but the devilish work in hand. He undertook and despatched three single engagements in masterly style and then came face to face with Hicks. He did not know the short, heavy-set fellow with the black beard and the brandished cutlas for the redoubtable pirate; but if it had been the evil one himself he would not have cared. He ran Hicks through the top of the right lung and passed on along the slippery deck. Twenty minutes later the last of the Polly's crew gave up his black soul through a red gash in his breast.

Of the twenty-eight who had left the white schooner in the three boats, only

eighteen had come over the Polly's rail. Of the eighteen, six now lay dead, seven sat or crawled upon the deck, grievously wounded, and five remained on their feet.

Of the five, only James Burnham and one other had escaped without a scratch. And yet Burnham had been the first over the rail, the first to kill, and the slayer of the terrific Hicks. His exploits had filled his comrades with wonder and admiration, his enemies with horror.

Now, with the long, straight blade held low before him, blood dripping slowly from the point, he led the way to the cabin. The four others who could walk followed him briskly and two of the grievously wounded crawled after, bleeding and groaning and cursing.

The poop-deck was raised about four feet above the main-deck, and three short steps in a hooded hatch led down to the cabin door and the level of the cabin-deck. The door stood open. James Burnham entered and halted, staring into the gloom of the ill-lit apartment. The four crowded at his shoulders. The wounded men dragged themselves down the steps, smearing the planks with their blood.

The cabin was long and narrow and lighted only by two small ports beneath the after coaming of the poop. Closed doors lined it on both sides. Burnham advanced a step or two, turned to the right, and pushed open one of the doors. It opened upon utter darkness and a smell of dried fruits. A pantry evidently.

He tried the next door and found it locked. The key was not in the lock. He smashed it open with his shoulder and stumbled into a narrow, clean, white berth well lit by a port. The fellows crowding on the threshold swore with astonishment and delight; and James Burnham steadied himself and stared into the eyes of a woman.

She was young and tall and generously proportioned. Her hair was black and of silken texture; her eyes were as dark and liquid as eddies in a deep river; her brow was smooth, and her glowing cheeks showed an artful bloom of white powder. She wore a long robe of flowered silk, its open neck displaying the white pillar of her throat and a flake of her white breast; its short sleeves discovering her round white arms.

Her left hand was pressed to her bosom, and in her right hand she held a knife no

thicker than a bodkin; but her eyes gave no sign of either fear or fury. A smile touched her crimson lips, and her gaze wavered from James Burnham's face. The tough rascals in the door openly swore their admiration.

Burnham bowed.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, my dear madam," he said. "May I make so bold as to ask you for the pretty toy in your hand — not your heart, madam, but the thing in your right hand? You have nothing to fear from the worthy mariners at my back. Like myself, your most humble and devoted servant, they are veritable lambs in the presence of a lady."

The woman looked at him wide-eyed, with even more than her former interest.

XI

"You are of the — the quality, as you say it, captain?" queried the young woman, in halting English, but with perfect composure. "Is it not? I see it by your manner. You are the gentry, sir."

"A poor, disinherited gentleman of Berkshire, madam," replied Burnham.

"But he bain't the cap'n, for all his quality," said one of the fellows on the threshold with a gusty hoot of laughter.

Burnham turned upon the speaker slowly, with a droop of the lids and a harsh, sidling twist of the mouth. His eyes glinted.

"Did I hear any one speak?" he asked softly. "Bolt, did you speak?"

Bolt was a strapping fellow of middle age, with small eyes and heavy jaws. He was one of the recruits from the mutineers and ranked high among them as a ruthless fighter.

"Ye heard me, Jim Burnham," he said, "unless ye be deaf. I be telling the wench that ye bain't the cap'n."

For a second or two he returned Burnham's glinting regard with an insolent glare; and then his eyes wavered, he shuffled his feet uneasily, and laughed unconvincingly. He lowered his gaze and stared at the heavy, besmeared cutlas in his hand.

"Perfectly true, I am not the captain," said James coolly; "but I am James Burnham, none the less, with the temper I was born with and a peculiar objection to bellowing calves of your kidney, Master Bolt. The truth is, you stick in my gullet like a lump of rotten beef. Come on deck,

my hearty, and I'll be delighted to show you exactly what I think of you. There is room enough in the scuppers for one more corpse!"

He turned to the woman, who had listened to the dispute in silence and watched the faces of the men with a light of alert calculation in her dark eyes.

"I would invite you up to see the entertainment, but the deck is foul with blood," said Burnham.

"I care not for a little blood," she replied calmly. "I have seen much."

Bolt plunged the point of his cutlas at Burnham's abdomen; but Burnham had been watching him from the corner of one eye and twirled aside in the nick of time. The broad point went through the tongue of Burnham's leather belt, within an inch of his hip, and pinned him to the bulkhead. Before Bolt could withdraw it Burnham drove the point of his rapier into his assailant's right side, through and through.

Bolt sank with a scream, fell sidewise, and his blood spurted over the woman's feet and the hem of her silken robe. She had the grace to cringe back against the ship's side and cover her eyes with her hands.

Bolt was dead. The three in the doorway stared at the bulky corpse with astonishment and satisfaction depicted on their faces.

"He was allus treacherous, was Bolt," said one. "Mind how he ran his knife into Jersey Dick, mates? But he was strong with the captain."

"Aye, he was strong with Trimmer," said another, "an' he'd get the quarter-master's berth, sure's he's gone below, but for the fact as how he's dead. Treacherous, aye, and a bully!"

"That's him," said the third; "and he was the same afore he turned gentleman o' fortune. Handy with the iron, he was!"

James Burnham withdrew his sword from the dead body and stepped out into the main cabin. The woman followed him. The wounded men were still there; but one had ceased to crawl in his quest for treasure and lay flat on his face—dead. Burnham glanced around him, then went on deck; and the woman followed him close. The three other unwounded survivors of the boarding-party remained below to break into the late Hellfire Hicks's treasure-chests.

Burnham and the woman reached the deck just in time to behold the last plunge of the valiant brig. She went down head first, and the bright and lively seas danced over her grave.

The white schooner was approaching, her work well done. She was not half a mile away, a beautiful thing of living white upon the still blue of the sky and the dancing blue of the sea, slanting gracefully in her long tack across the wind.

The woman placed both her hands on Burnham's arm, stood very close to him, and gazed up into his face.

"I regret you are not the captain," she said. "I like you; and it may be I do not like this Captain Trimmer so well. Captain Hicks tell me, when he shut me in my berth after he see your schooner, how it may be that Trimmer get me very soon. So when I see you my heart jump with joy and I say to myself that it is better."

"Trimmer is a very amiable and worthy person, I assure you," said Burnham, smiling. "But how came you into the hands of the late Captain Hicks, my beauty?"

"He take me from a ship one whole year ago," she replied. "He had much love for me for six month, and then not so much—but more than I have for him. He was the lover of many women—and some not beautiful, as I see with my own eyes sometimes. He is good dead, I think—more than alive. How did he get his death?"

"I had the pleasure of giving it to him," replied Burnham coolly.

"Ah! You have the great courage, the heart of stone," she exclaimed. "My father was such—a soldier of France; but if he had been a pirate he could not have suffered contentment except he was the captain. And why is it not so with you? You kill that Hicks. You have the courage—the heart undismayed. I like you; and it may be I do not like Trimmer."

"You flatter me," said Burnham, laughing low and heartlessly. "My dear, I must stop my ears, else I'll get my gullet slit before my fortune is made. It is treason to listen to you. It is the captain who divides and distributes the spoils, giving this to one and that to another. But at least there will be no harm in taking one kiss—if you will give it."

She glanced up at him archly, neither consent nor denial in her eyes. At that

moment a boat put off from the white schooner, and Trimmer and eight men came aboard the Polly. The captain was in high spirits, for a quantity of bar silver had been found aboard the brig, together with wines of rare vintages and some manner of ecclesiastical dignitary. The unfortunate brig had been Spanish, and homeward bound from some rich port on the main. Although daunted for a moment by the sight of the dead on the black schooner's decks, and the thought of his short-handed condition, the sight of the young woman at James Burnham's side wrought Trimmer's immediate recovery.

From the condition of the Black Polly's hold and lazaretto, it was evident that Hicks had made a number of profitable captures since his last trip ashore for the purpose of caching his plunder. English, Spanish, and French gold coins to the value of two thousand guineas were found beneath the decking of the late commander's berth. Silks, set and unset jewels, and a sack of silver coins were found in the same hiding-place.

On the other hand, the provisions were low, the water was foul in the casks, and the last grain of gunpowder vanished. The hold was more than half filled with a jumble of all manner of merchandise.

After a thorough overhauling of the Polly, Trimmer put back to his own schooner with the woman and her personal belongings, the jewels, and the little bags of gold coins. The silver, some useful pistols and cutlasses, and several boatloads of general merchandise followed in the transfer from schooner to schooner. Then the Polly was scuttled.

This affair had reduced the white schooner's company from forty-six to twenty-seven, including the wounded; but three of the Spanish sailors from the valiant brig had expressed their willingness to enlist with Captain Trimmer and were being held under consideration. These, with the young woman from the Polly and the ecclesiastic from the brig, swelled the list to thirty-two.

Captain Trimmer called a meeting just before sunset of that busy day. All were present save the bishop—he was that, at least—and two of the wounded. The helmsman attended to the wheel and the meeting at one and the same time, while the cook stood in the door of the galley with one ear devoted to Captain Trimmer

and the other to the boiling of his coppers. The young woman stood composedly at Trimmer's side, her smooth cheeks delicately aglow, her fine eyes languorously inquisitive. Half a dozen men, including Slim Sam, Wells, and James Burnham, stood close to these two. Burnham watched the woman covertly, with an ironic glimmer in his eyes.

John Trimmer was in fine feather. He cocked his hat and complimented his comrades on their luck in a few words. He then named the recent and lamented dead, and remarked that a slight degree of consolation might be derived from the fact that the fewer the survivors, the larger the shares of the spoils. His audience expressed appreciation of his humor with blistering oaths and harsh hoots of laughter. He named the chief items of the plunder and said that the sharing would take place on the morrow. This, too, was well received.

Next he asked the company's pleasure as to the filling of the vacant berth of quartermaster. Some discussion followed in ragged whispers.

Burnham paid no attention to the question and seemed unconscious of the discussion and the glances which were shot at him. He moved away, turned his back on the captain and the company, and squared his elbows on the rail. He was coolly but elegantly attired and wore that murderous, straight rapier at his side in a scabbard of red Spanish leather.

"I says Jim Burnham!" cried a mahogany-faced fellow with a broken nose and a bandage around his head.

Another beauty gave voice at this in blasphemous protest. He did not approve of promoting a new hand and a stranger over the bloody heads of the tried and the true. He accused the gentleman of the broken nose of toadyism, and cast reflections on his ancestry.

A clamor arose, and the crowd closed and surged forward. It expanded as suddenly as it had contracted, every man jumping away from his neighbors on the right and the left and at his back—and there on the deck lay the wine-inspired gentleman who had insulted him of the broken nose, writhing in his own blood.

The unfortunate debater was carried to his berth, and the business of the meeting was continued. Trimmer, entirely sober himself, felt that it was not the time to

exact discipline. It was a novel feeling for him to have, and he wondered at it vaguely; for never before had he allowed an unauthorized knifing in his presence to pass without immediate and violent punishment. But now he went on with the business of electing a quartermaster.

Inquiring glances were turned upon him, the most piercing of which was from the small eyes of Slim Sam, first mate and second in command.

"Who says nay to James Burnham having the berth?" he asked.

If any one felt disinclined to see Burnham promoted, no one felt inclined to risk saying so. The man with the damaged nose glared around him hopefully, his red knife still in his hand; but nobody cared to invite a second exhibition of his prowess in debate.

"Mr. Burnham, this company of gentlemen of fortune has elected you to the berth and rank of quartermaster," Trimmer said. "This means that you rank as the junior officer. Mr. Nairn, third mate and boat-swain, will instruct you in your duties. You fought like a hero to-day, Jim, and deserve the honor that has been bestowed upon you by your comrades."

A ragged cheer went up, after which the cook called all hands to supper. Burnham raised his hat and bowed to Trimmer, then turned and bowed to the crew. He was pleased, but he felt nothing in any way resembling gratitude.

For a fleeting moment he was conscious of a sharp disgust for Trimmer, the woman, the cheering ruffians, and himself; but the sensation was almost too brief to record itself on his brain. He turned again to speak to John Trimmer; but the captain had vanished.

The new quartermaster went forward and ate his supper with the men. The first, second, and third mates and the gunner did the same. Welsh Owen, the possessor of the bandaged head and broken nose, drew the new officer's attention to the fact that he, Mr. Owen, had silenced all opposition to Mr. Burnham's election. The Welshman was not sober.

"I noticed it," replied Burnham, "and consider it very handsome of you; but may I ask why you did it?"

"Ye know two men when ye know me," said Welsh Owen ponderously. "Ye know one man when ye know me sober an' another when ye know me drunk. That's

how ye see me now. Ye see the real William Owen now—only a bit knocked about. Sober, I'm an ordinary shellback—mighty ordinary. Man o' whims I am—and education. Admire a gentleman—even a bad one. Bad one myself, even if I am a parson's son. Excuse me, I'll just lie down an' take a nap."

Slim Sam plucked Burnham by the sleeve and drew him away from the group squatting about the door of the galley. Burnham wondered, for though he had frequently felt the first mate's darkling glance upon him he had never before been addressed by him.

"Trimmer made a mistake," said the mate in a curiously thin and gentle voice. "He loosed his grip; he weakened. He let Welsh Owen go unpunished after the knifing, though yesterday he would have struck him down with his own hand. He is afraid; and once a man shows fear of trouble, trouble courts him. It is the wench, doubtless. He is a fool about women. He turned a blind eye to Welsh Owen so's not to draw attention to himself and the woman. It is against the rules of our company to keep women aboard this schooner—and a wise rule, too!"

"And yet the incident seemed to pass unremarked," replied Burnham.

"Ye're wrong, sir," returned the expickpocket. "It escaped nobody. Tomorrow ye'll see. The captain will put her ashore—unless he is quite mad. Otherwise? Well, a new captain."

Burnham distrusted Slim Sam. He saw that the fellow was hinting something beneath his words—inviting questions—offering something. But Burnham had learned caution of late. He pretended stupidity.

"I don't know your rules," he said. "Who is the woman? Where did Hicks get her, I wonder? Is she French or Spanish?"

The first mate smiled. He seemed to be bent upon humoring this new quartermaster.

"You are younger than I am," he said tenderly; "but I was never a squire of dames. I never attracted them; and I was only a poor man, a bookseller's clerk, before—my trouble. But I can tell you about this woman. She is called Hélène da Silva, and is generally supposed to be the daughter of a French freebooter who sailed and was hanged under the name of Saint-

Ovide, and of a Spanish lady of degree. She is not unknown. I have heard songs about her in more than one port. She is a sort of queen of her kind—a bird of paradise among fowl of her feather. Hicks went ashore and besieged a town for her, and took her from the governor, having first killed the governor."

James Burnham slept lightly that night. For the first time since joining the white schooner's company he felt that he was not safe from the treacherous whim or secret grudge of a shipmate. Discipline had relaxed for the first time since his joining. He had seen Welsh Owen knife a man in a fit of drunken rage and go unpunished. A spirit of unrest and uncertainty was in the air. The strong fingers of John Trimmer were relaxed for the moment.

So James slept lightly, with his hand on the haft of his knife. He congratulated himself on his luck when he awoke in the same world in which he had fallen asleep.

Captain Trimmer appeared early, gorgeously attired, and informed the company that the sacrament and ceremony of marriage would be performed in half an hour's time by his reverence, the Spanish bishop. The gentlemen of fortune received the glad news sullenly. They were heavy of head and stomach. They were in no mood for jokes or sentiment. They had seen the hand of their captain falter. They were disillusioned.

They stared gloomily at their commander, reflecting that life was no joke for them, whatever it might be for him. He had taken no wound yesterday, they told themselves; but he had taken Hellfire Hicks's mistress and wardrobe without so much as by-your-leave to the stout lads who had done the bloody work on the Black Polly's deck.

Trimmer was quick to see the trouble. He knew that he had been guilty of a grave mistake in not having struck Welsh Owen to the deck at the time of the knife-play. But he pretended to see nothing critical or unusual in the attitude of his comrades. He bowed, waved a hand, and went below.

"The wench has made a monkey of him already," muttered Wells.

Trimmer soon reappeared, this time dragging the Spanish bishop at his heels. Behind the faint and reluctant prelate came Hélène, gowned in silk, wonderful and distracting to behold.

"The man's a fool," muttered Wells to

Burnham. "He has gone mad overnight. He is holding a candle to the powder this minute."

The unfortunate ecclesiastic had been forcibly attired in his hot and costly robes of office. He was an old man, sore stricken with fever and terror. He slipped limply from the captain's arms to the deck. Trimmer lifted him to his feet again—and behold, he was dead!

It was a capital joke. Trimmer laughed uproariously, but keen ears detected a note of apprehension in his laughter. No one else joined in his mirth. They were in so evil a mood that their eyes were blinded even to the humor of a dead bishop.

Oaths were muttered. James Burnham smiled ironically. Somebody sneered. The beautiful young woman, unmoved by the fate of the aged prelate, glanced toward the sullen company and turned pale with apprehension.

Trimmer ceased his laughter and began to glare. A volley of astounding oaths burst from him. He drew a brace of pistols from the pockets of his flowered-silk coat. His mood, too, had become dangerous.

Slim Sam, rustily garbed and apparently unarmed, approached him with a conciliating smile on his narrow face and a humble stoop to his thin shoulders. He whispered a few words. Trimmer listened, still glaring. The first mate whispered again, this time at considerable length. Captain Trimmer snorted; he gnawed his lip; he swore.

"What is this?" he cried suddenly. "Am I not your captain? Is it not in my power to break rules as well as to make them? Put her ashore, d'ye say? Who won ye free from death on the plantations? Who put gold into yer dirty pockets for ye? Tell me that!"

His square, coarse face was convulsed with rage. Rage gripped his throat until his voice stuck in it with a gasping gurgle. He brandished his pistols. But the whispering voice of Slim Sam went on at his ear. He choked. He lowered his pistols and listened again.

"Let it be so!" he cried at last. "I stand by the rules; but ye white-livered spawn of the gutter, I've learned my lesson! One o' ye broke a rule yesterday; but because we are short-handed I spared him. The like will never happen again."

The schooner's course was changed; and, three days later, Hélène was put

ashore in a little lawless port unknown to honest mariners. Other treasure went ashore there also and into secret places. Fresh water was taken aboard, and, after four days of carousing in that spot that looked like heaven, but which was, in fact, nearer hell than any place on earth, the dangerous company put to sea for another cruise.

XII

THE governor of Nevis had given up hope of finding his friend James Burnham and had decided that he had left the island by the time the Tartar let go her anchors in the harbor.

The battery on the hill and the little war-vessel in the basin exchanged salutes. Then the sloop's commander, accompanied by the senior of his two lieutenants and three very small midshipmen, came ashore to pay his respects to Captain Nash. The governor had a dozen of the officers of the garrison in attendance and young Mr. Willis.

Mr. Willis looked paler, thinner, and brighter of eye than ever. He had been working hard over Percy Stanton—harder than there was need for, perhaps; and the beautiful Miss Kitty had been his faithful assistant on the case. To practise all one's skill to save a person from death whom one would gladly have dead is a cruel strain on one's nervous system. So Willis found it—for he was desperately in love with Kitty Trimmer.

Slight indications of polite astonishment escaped the gentlemen of the governor's suite upon the entrance of the gentlemen from the sloop. His excellency himself showed signs of agitation. Presentations were made, and greetings and introductions were exchanged.

Lieutenant Alexander Burnham was puzzled by the glances of astonishment, inquiry, and keen interest which were shot at him from every eye. He was embarrassed, and his manner indicated the state of his mind. He wondered what could be wrong with him. Was his face dirty? Had he left some lather on it after his early and hurried shave? Was he improperly dressed? What the mischief were people staring at?

Alexander Burnham differed physically from his brother James only in facial expression and the tint and quality of his eyes. There was nothing sardonic in

Alexander's appearance, though the lines of his chin, jaw, and brow were amazingly like the lines of his brother's profile. His eyes were dark-blue, direct and open in their glance, warm alike in kindness and in anger. The expression of his mouth, in repose, was grave, but kindly.

From the chin to the soles of the feet Alexander resembled James as one pea resembles another from the same pod. The same long, straight limbs, well muscled and well boned; the narrow hips, flat flanks, and trim waists; the deep chests and straight, broad shoulders—I doubt if their own mother could have distinguished the one from the other save by their faces.

But the natures of the brothers differed as day differs from night, save in the matter of the unflinching courage of their breed. Alexander was both honest and honorable, kind of heart, quick of sympathy. He was shy and modest concerning his own attainments; and, at the same time, he possessed a very lively sense of self-respect and a still more lively respect for his family, past and present.

The governor drew Lieutenant Burnham aside at the first opportunity, laid a kindly hand on the sailor's arm, and gazed into the flushed and honest face with unmistakable signs of agitation.

"He has gone," whispered his excellency. "The poor lad has gone!"

Alexander stared, wondering if the old gentleman had suffered from the sun.

"You have not heard?" queried Nash. "Your brother—he has gone."

The color went out of Alexander Burnham's face and his arm twitched.

"My brother!" he said blankly. "What brother, sir? I have three."

"James," replied the governor, pressing the young man's arm with his fat fingers and staring up anxiously into his face. "Don't think that I had anything to do with his flight, for Heaven's sake! He knew that you were coming. I showed him Scovil's letter. He seemed overjoyed at the prospect of meeting you again; but, almost immediately, he was forced into a quarrel with a young man named Stanton. They fought, but I knew nothing of it, of course, until James had pinked his man and gone away. He thought he had killed Stanton—and doubtless he felt that he had abused my hospitality. In fact, he was advised to flee by his second. That hurt me—for I would have stood his friend through thick

and thin. I am fond of him, and so is my daughter. He did me a great service once, a service I shall never forget. He saved my girl's life. He left a letter behind him for Elizabeth—very pathetic, very poetic, honest, and manly. He mentioned youthful follies, unworthiness, and hopeless love in the letter. But he is gone, and I can't find him."

Lieutenant Burnham was dazed, and he looked it. Wonder, doubt, suspicion, shame, and apprehension shook brain and heart and obscured thought. He gaped at the governor. He felt the eyes of the entire company upon him. In spite of the turmoil of his emotions and the dazed state of his mind, he suddenly felt a little throb of relief at the thought that James had departed before the Tartar's arrival—if, that is, James had ever been here.

"An impostor!" he exclaimed. "Surely an impostor! James sailed for Kingston, in Jamaica, and arrived at that port. I heard it from my father, sir. There can be no mistake about that. Did this—this gentleman—tell you he was James Burnham, a son of Sir Walter Burnham?"

"He did," replied Captain Nash, with more composure than he had yet displayed. "He did, sir; but I was aware of his father's name before he told me anything about himself. He was ill—he came to us ill, yet as a hero—and Willis and I saw his back when we were getting him into bed. I had heard of your worthy father's whim for marking his children even as he marks his silver, and so I knew the stranger for a Burnham of Burnham at a glance. True, an impostor might have his shoulder marked so for the very purpose of imposing on people; but our friend James is of your height, of your weight and size, I swear; and as like you in face, save for the color of his eyes, as one round shot is like another. You are pale, sir! I did not mean to administer a shock, sir, upon my soul! I'm a blundering old fool. Take my arm, lad. Come to the open air."

"Really, your excellency, it is nothing," said Alexander. "The sun of yesterday, perhaps. I was shaken a little at your news—for a moment. I thought James safe in Jamaica, engaged in commerce. He—he and my father had a slight disagreement before he left home. He is inclined to be headstrong—at least so I gathered from what my father told me. I am anxious about James."

Alexander Burnham returned to his ship with apprehension still awake in him, but the emotion of bewilderment dominating his mind. Why had the black goat of his family come to Nevis? And how was it possible that he had won Captain Nash's friendship as well as his gratitude?

Could it be that his father had been mistaken in his reading of James's character, and had made a cruel blunder in his treatment of him? He could not bring himself to believe this of Sir Walter, for the baronet was as just as he was hard. Alexander was sorely puzzled.

Mr. Willis came aboard the Tartar later in the day, dined with the officers in the narrow, low-roofed apartment which served as both wardroom and gun-room, and afterward sat on the tiny quarter-deck with Alexander Burnham and talked about James Burnham.

Alexander was careful not to show anything more than a brotherly anxiety in his questions. But few questions were required to start Willis and to keep him talking. That he admired James Burnham was evident to the other and soothed Alexander's strong family pride.

Willis told of the arrival of James out of the unknown, fainting but heroic and victorious, with the rescued girl in his arms and the misguided New Englanders at his heels. He talked of James as he had known him after his days of illness—always ready to help others, always polite and cheerful. He touched lightly on his charming, devotional, yet delicate attitude toward Elizabeth Nash. He described the duel, the cause of which he did not know. He described it at length, in glowing terms. It was very evident that the young surgeon admired Mr. James Burnham as greatly as he despised Mr. Stanton.

Alexander, listening keenly, and keenly apprehensive for the honor of the family, could find no fault with his brother's behavior in the duel. This puzzled him more than ever, though he was pleased. He knew James for a rascal at heart and the sorest disgrace the family had known in six generations; and yet the fellow had come to Nevis, stripped of all his worldly gear, and had behaved like a Christian and a gentleman. The rogue was clever beyond a doubt; and Alexander was conscious of a throb of pride.

Alexander Burnham went ashore in the evening and called again on Captain

Nash. The governor could talk of nothing but James—the lost James. He told the story of his daughter's rescue again and again.

On his way down to the water-front Alexander ran foul of a number of adventuring military gentlemen. They took him in hand in spite of his protests. They plied him with rum punches in a favorite resort of theirs, through the wide windows of which the trade-wind always blows with a swishing of foliage and a hum of surf. They informed him that his brother James was a very great man; and from their somewhat mixed and aimless conversation he learned that Kitty Trimmer was on the island.

Now it happened that he had heard of Kitty and of James's early affair with the daughter of the tailor of Wantage. His festive friends told him that Stanton was to marry Kitty; so he put two and two together and guessed something of the cause of the trouble between James and Stanton.

He felt discouraged, for the governor had told him of James's love for Elizabeth Nash. He saw that James was the same old James, the same rascal—only cleverer, perhaps.

Alexander Burnham went aboard the sloop and lay awake for a long time. Before closing his eyes he prayed that his duties in the islands might never bring him face to face with his precious brother.

When Elizabeth Nash first met Alexander Burnham she lost color, swayed, and laid a hand on her father's arm for support; but her fine eyes brightened with a wonderful light at the back of them. This was the romantic being that she had built of gratitude and admiration in her deep heart about the person of James Burnham. This was James as she had dreamed of him at night, not as she had seen him in the white light of day and the yellow light of candles.

The sailor's blue eyes dwelt kindly, even tenderly, upon her face as he took her extended hand in his strong grasp.

During the week that followed their first meeting the governor's daughter and Alexander Burnham met daily. They rode together along the sands and upon the hills in the clean, cool hours of morning and evening. They sat in shaded and beflowered gardens side by side. At first the girl would talk of James, describing his valor and his unfailing good nature, and

the sadness that always lurked behind his smile; but in a day or two she ceased to speak of him.

So a week went past; and then Commander Scovil decided that it was his duty to put to sea and hunt for pirates. The sloop was to sail at daybreak. Alexander went ashore on the eve of sailing, just as the stars began to appear on the purple overhead and the white sea-fire to burn in the purple under-keel, and went up to Government House. He found Elizabeth in her own rose-garden alone. They walked the narrow, sanded paths for several minutes in silence side by side.

"We are to sail in the morning," he said suddenly.

"My father has told me," she replied.

"We expect to be back in two weeks," he said.

She moved aside and seated herself on a bench of gray stone. He stood before her bareheaded, his cocked hat under his left arm. The star-shine touched the gold lace of his coat, the silver hilt of his sword, the buckles of his shoes. The elfin light swam in her eyes until they shone like stars.

"Do you love James?" he asked, his voice very tender and unsteady.

"No," she replied, the star-shine shimmering in her eyes.

"Did you love him?"

"Yes—for an hour, after first reading his letter."

His shoulders moved with the sigh of relief that escaped him.

"I am glad of that," he said. "James is a brave man; but—well, he is no more worthy of your—of a woman's love—than most men are."

"Are men so unworthy?" she asked, with a flicker of white lids upon starlit eyes and a twitch of her perfect lips. "They all seem brave and honorable and wondrous polite to me."

"We are well enough in our way, I have no doubt," he said gravely; "but—but you would not understand. Most of us are brave, and if we happen to be gentlemen, we have good manners; but—well, I talk like a fool. You will forgive me, I hope. You are kind."

He stooped suddenly, lifted her right hand, and pressed his lips to it. He let it fall, turned, and walked swiftly away.

Elizabeth raised her hand close to her eyes and looked at the back of it. She

returned it to her lap and sat motionless for many minutes, gazing straight in front of her. Soon she began to laugh softly; and finally, reflecting on the dangers of pirate-hunting and the queerness of mankind, she fell to weeping.

Ten days after the sloop-of-war's departure from Nevis a small trader came in with English mails from Barbados. Among the governor's letters was one from Sir Walter Burnham. It was a caution and a disclosure in one, short and to the point. It was heartless and just.

Captain Nash read it slowly again and again with staring eyes and purpling face. At last he burned it, rubbed the black flakes to powder under his foot, swore, drew a deep breath, and marched off in search of Elizabeth. Directed by a servant, he found her in the rose-garden, seated where Alexander Burnham had last seen her. He sat down beside her, breathing heavily, and took her hand.

She looked at him with inquiry, then dismay, then terror in her eyes. Had he received some disastrous word of the Tartar?

"Do you love James Burnham?" asked the governor.

The color flooded back to her cheeks and life to her eyes.

"No," she said.

The governor's manner changed, and he looked confused as well as relieved. He kissed her and got heavily but hurriedly to his feet.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed; and then, continuing with less energy: "He was a brave man and I owe him much; but he is—wild—too devilish wild."

"Did Alexander tell you so?" she asked in startled tones.

"Alexander? No. His father, Sir Walter, wrote me," he replied.

The Tartar returned to the little harbor after two weeks spent in a fruitless search for gentlemen of fortune. By this time Percy Stanton had recovered sufficiently from his wound to walk abroad for short distances. But Willis continued to attend him daily, and daily to meet Kitty Trimmer, for Stanton had been removed to Major Black's quarters as soon as he was convalescent.

Kitty had nursed her wealthy and wounded lover devotedly, and it was rumored that the two would marry in the course of the next few months and return

to England. Stanton continued to keep the affair from the ears of his ambitious family. He felt confident that he would be able to make his peace with them after his marriage.

Alexander Burnham put on his best clothes, hastened up to Government House, and paid his respects to Captain Nash and Elizabeth. His honest blue eyes warmed at sight of the girl; but otherwise he let no sign escape him of the great thing that glowed in his heart. They were the best of friends, as any one could see with half an eye. Neither of them mentioned the questions he had asked so boldly and she had answered so honestly that starlit night.

The governor was in no haste to inform Alexander that he had heard particulars of the past career of the precious James; but he felt it his duty to do this, and at last, after the sloop had been back in port several days, he invited the sailor into his office and told him about Sir Walter's letter.

Alexander's face grew white, then red as fire.

"It is true, sir," he said. "I should have told you myself, I suppose; but you seemed fond of him, he had done no harm here—and, after all, he is my own brother. I do not deny that my father had to send him away from England; but I had no wish to blacken his name and my own on this island, where he evidently comported himself like a man of heart and breeding. The story is now common property, I imagine; and doubtless you will be glad to see as little of any Burnham as possible in the future."

"What d'ye mean?" roared Nash. "D'ye think I'd circulate the story? And d'ye think I'd hold the sins of one brother against another? Lad, you are welcome to my house every day and every hour of the day."

Alexander thanked his excellency somewhat gloomily and wished him good day. His pride of name and blood was cut deep. Nash was sorry for him! Elizabeth pitied him! Pity was an emotion which he had no ambition to inspire in any breast.

XIII

ALEXANDER BURNHAM kept away from Government House for several days. Shame made him bitter and suspicious. It was hard enough, he reflected, to know himself that James was a cheat and a

thief; but to have others know it made it seem a hundred times more shameful and more hard to bear.

This is where he suffered for his acute family pride. A skeleton in the closet is a depressing possession; but when the door of the closet has been opened to the public gaze the situation becomes worse than depressing. Alexander felt that the door of the Burnham skeleton-closet now stood open to the astonished and delighted gaze of the public of Nevis.

Being convinced of this fact, he spent all his leisure in looking for proof of it—a foolish and illogical proceeding. He weighed and questioned every word and glance of his messmates and of the gentlemen ashore. He thought of Elizabeth Nash in a bitter misery of spirit. That pearly dome of dream had crashed back upon his heart at the first realization of his shameful position.

Alexander's watchfulness went unrewarded for several days; and then, as luck would have it, he met Mr. Stanton. Although Stanton's wound was now thoroughly healed, the unfortunate duelist was not fully recovered from the effects of it. His face was thin and white, and his legs were a trifle wabbly; but his eyes were clearer than they had been in years, thanks to his enforced abstinence from wines and punches of late.

The two met in that pleasant resort on the water-front where the sea-wind and the music of the surf flooded in all day long at the open windows and doors. As luck would have it, Stanton was celebrating his first day of freedom from the irksome authority of Mr. Willis and Dr. Hamm.

When Alexander Burnham entered the room with one of the reefers from the sloop he beheld a company of six seated at a round table, with a huge punch-bowl in their midst, and at another table Mr. Willis, Captain Cross, and Mr. Morton. He bowed to the company at large and went over to Cross's table, with the midshipman at his heels.

He knew Cross, Morton, Willis, and all the young men at the larger table, with the exception of Stanton. Before accepting the seat at the smaller table, which Captain Cross was quick to offer to him, he treated the captain and the other two gentlemen each to a searching glance; but he failed to detect anything of embarrassment or aloofness in their eyes or their manners.

So he and the little reeper sat down, and each ordered a glass of wine.

Several of the men at the other side of the room shouted the names of Alexander and the midshipman, lifted their brimming glasses of punch, and drank to the sailors' healths. The sailors speedily returned the compliment.

Stanton, attracted by the mention of the name of Burnham, sat back in his chair and stared across at Alexander with owlish but insolent eyes and a sneering mouth; but Alexander, who was looking at Cross, did not see it.

"Stanton is at it again," said Cross. "Is it safe, Willis?"

"He is out of my hands now," replied the young surgeon. "Let him die his own death—a hoggish death—if he's determined to kill himself. Mr. Burnham, your very good health!"

A disturbance arose at the other table. Stanton had swallowed three glasses of punch in rapid succession, and, after his period of weakness and abstinence, each glass had shot its valiant fumes straight into his empty head. His head rang with rum and the name of Burnham. He did not approve of that name; and he felt very brave. Burnham! To the Inferno with all the Burnhams not already there! He tried to get on his feet, but the men on his right and left held him in his chair.

"You, there!" he shouted, struggling with his friends. "You, Burnham; I've got a word for your private ear!"

A hand was laid over his foolish mouth, but he dashed it savagely aside and continued to bawl at the other table.

"Where's your precious brother, my fine Sir Sucking Admiral?" he bellowed. "Gone away—what? Gone to earth, hey? Why was he chased out of London; can you tell me that?"

Alexander Burnham did not move leg or arm, but a tremor passed over his face and the muscles at the back of his neck twitched. Captain Cross jumped to his feet in anger.

"Back to your quarters, sir!" he roared. "Away with you, you sot—you fool! D'ye hear me? Obey instantly, or I'll have you broken! Wilson, Bridge, take him back to barracks. He has disgraced the regiment and the service. March!"

Stanton went, muttering and staggering, but cowed to the bottom of his flabby heart

by the captain's threat. A shamefaced subaltern went on either side of him, supporting him and propelling him with a violence that threatened to pull his arms out of joint in several places. But for his recent illness they would have kicked him.

"The whole regiment will apologize to you for this," exclaimed Cross, turning to Burnham. "A more cowardly and despicable attack, a more gratuitous insult, I never heard. The fool! He forced your brother to fight with him, was fairly beaten, and now slanders his opponent and tries to dirty his name—and to you! But the fool was drunk. Otherwise he'd never have ventured to open his mouth."

By the flushed faces and muttered words of the others it was evident that all agreed with Captain Cross. One by one they shook hands with Alexander. Alexander was deeply moved.

"Mr. Stanton was drunk," he said, "and but recently recovered from an illness; so I promise you that I will forget the incident without loss of time. You have behaved very handsomely, gentlemen, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Captain Cross, I thank you for your splendid indignation in behalf of my—of a member of my family. Gentlemen one and all, your humble servant. Boy, bring a dozen of claret—or shall it be a fresh brew of punch, gentlemen?"

Alexander went up to Government House that evening and told his excellency of Stanton's attack. He wanted to know, very naturally, how Percy had come by his information concerning James.

Captain Nash charged furiously about the room and swore. He swore that Stanton had learned nothing from him or his. He swore that he had never been so insulted in all his life before as by Alexander's unjust, unkind, and altogether indescribable suspicion. He swore that he had thought better of Alexander. He swore that, but for his official position, his love for his motherless child, and his old liking for Alexander himself, he would call Alexander out for it. And then he swore some more.

Alexander saw that he had made a serious mistake, and said as much. He begged the furious old sea-dog's pardon, left his deepest respects for Miss Nash, and beat a retreat.

"It's the Trimmer girl, of course," he told himself. "I'm a fool not to have

thought of that before. I have damned myself beyond hope with the Nashes!"

After days of artful maneuvering on his part, Alexander managed to meet Kitty Trimmer alone. The meeting was utterly unexpected on her part. Alexander stepped out from the cover of a manchineel-bush and confronted her. She was mounted on her pony.

She uttered a sharp cry and made as if she would spur her mount from the trail; but he raised his hand with a gesture that halted her. He looked at her steadily, with hard eyes and a grim face, and neither lifted his hat nor bowed.

"My girl," he said coldly, "you may remember me. I am Alexander Burnham, of Burnham. You, I know, are Kitty Trimmer, of Wantage. I have a few words to say to you on the subject of my brother James. Kindly tell Mr. Stanton that if I hear any more talk in this island of my brother's unfortunate past, the effect will be disastrous to himself and to you. I will have him out and kill him; and I will strip you of your fine, false plumes, my girl. That is all."

Alexander avoided the governor and Elizabeth until his excellency at last pocketed his official dignity and went aboard the sloop to come to an understanding with the sailor. Each apologized to the other half a dozen times. They shook hands as often; and at last they went ashore together and up to Government House arm in arm.

Their friendship was an assured thing; but Alexander was not happy. He could not rid himself of the idea that much of the governor's kindness to him was inspired by pity—by pity for him because his name was Burnham. It was a hard pill for Alexander to swallow.

Half an hour later, when he sat in the garden with Elizabeth, his mind and heart were poisoned toward her with the same thought. For she, too, was very kind. A Burnham wants to be admired by the woman he loves, not pitied by her. Alexander could not deny, even to himself, that he loved Elizabeth.

The Tartar went out of the little harbor again at an early hour of the morning on another cruise in search of pirates.

Captain Trimmer had recovered his old mastery over his uncertain and whimsical gentlemen of fortune by a series of splen-

did captures, murders, robberies, and scuttlings off the coast of Trinidad. Every gentleman of his company was now well along on the road to wealth. By discreet but constant recruiting from the crews of his prizes, he had built up his company to a selected force of one hundred and twenty of the hardest and most reckless rascals unchanged.

Trimmer's affairs were in this prosperous condition when he boarded the schooner *Le Diable* on a misty night and took her, with no damage to either of the vessels, but with much loss of life on the part of *Le Diable's* crew.

The master and owner of the schooner, who had died suddenly and violently, had been a Canadian of noble blood and a craving for profitable adventure. As his mother country was at war with England, he had built and manned *Le Diable* on the St. Lawrence, and had set out to serve France with one hand and fill his pockets with the other. He had met with successes off Newfoundland, off New England, off the Carolinas, the Bahamas, and Barbuda. Off Antigua he had been chased by an English sloop-of-war, but had managed to drop her, and now he lay dead on the deck. He had accomplished very little for the glory of the king of France and even less for himself.

A sudden death is apt to upset even the subtlest calculations and nullify the most amazing successes. But it would seem that the dead Canadian had done Captain John Trimmer a very good turn. John thought so, and felt a positive glow of gratitude; but John was wrong.

Captain Trimmer inspected *Le Diable* and her treasure, and was delighted with both. The Canadian schooner was as like the white schooner as a twin sister in all but the color of her graceful hull. It was this fact, together with the somewhat overmanned condition of the white schooner, and the twenty new prisoners whose fate had not yet been determined, that set a germ of ambition in Trimmer's mind into full life and size.

Why should he, John Trimmer, share the toll of the rich and narrow seas with such blunderers as Deck and Duval? Had not Hellfire Hicks already been swept from his path? Why should he not reap the harvest and harry the other harvesters with two ships instead of one? The personal risk would be no greater; he would

acquire wealth almost twice as fast, and soon be in a position to retire and live in England like a squire.

Meanwhile, he would be the greatest gentleman of fortune afloat. He possessed the brains and courage, the men, and now the ships. *Hélène* would see that he was a much greater man than the late Hicks. His vanity glowed. So he called his officers into the after-cabin of *Le Diable* and laid his plan before them.

Slim Sam trod lightly on James Burnham's toe beneath the table, then smoothly opposed the captain's suggestion of carrying on his activities in two hulls. Trimmer flared; but the first mate calmed him by saying that he objected to the plan because of its one and only weak spot. Could Captain Trimmer be aboard two vessels at once? No. Then how was the second vessel to be successfully operated?

Each schooner would need a leader. They had the ships, the guns, and the men; but had they more than one capable leader? No. This being so, he, the first mate, was in favor of keeping to their present arrangements and their small but safe winnings.

Trimmer was pleased with his first officer's tribute, but was not weakened in his intentions. He requested Mr. Burnham's opinion. James replied that he considered the idea of monopolizing the business in these waters to be a splendid one and worthy of his friend Jack; but he feared that the second schooner might fail to keep up to the white schooner's high standard of efficiency. Better stick to the one ship, he said.

Captain Trimmer did not ask Wells to speak. He banged the table with his fist and called Slim Sam and Burnham silly old women. Then, after a great deal of talk, now violent, now calm, now threatening, and now pleading, he talked them around to his own views of his ambitious plan. Then he thumped Slim Sam on the back and named him for commander of the second schooner.

Slim Sam jumped under the captain's heavy hand and wriggled away from the honor of commanding *Le Diable*. He was no sort of fighting man, he protested. He humbly suggested that James Burnham should command the new schooner.

This was finally agreed to by Trimmer, Wells, and the others, and James accepted the honor with seeming reluctance.

All the officers save Wells returned to the white schooner, leaving a strong guard aboard the prize. They had wines and rum up from the lazaretto and sat around the cabin-table until dawn arranging the details of management of the expanded business.

The two vessels were to work separately and as far apart as they might see fit; but once in each period of three months the new schooner was to put in at one or more of Trimmer's three secret havens and leave a report and her plunder.

Trimmer was to have the lion's share of the winnings of the new vessel, as well as of the old. Both were to keep a sharp lookout for Major Deck and Duval, and attack either of these rivals if they saw fair chances of success. In a year's time they were to meet in the most secluded of their three retreats and, if advisable at the time, make a final division of all spoils, and then scatter.

There were twelve other minor clauses in the agreement. Trimmer, Burnham, and the other leaders swore to abide by the terms of the agreement with oaths that might well have brought withering fire from heaven upon their ungodly heads.

In the morning the plan was roughly explained to all the men save those who were with Wells and the Canadian prisoners aboard the prize. The hardy ruffians cheered. Captain Trimmer asked for fifty volunteers to sail with Mr. Burnham. Every man of the company volunteered to go with the new commander. This was a slap in the face for Trimmer; but he grinned as if he liked it and set to work to select the fifty himself.

Burnham, Slim Sam, and the fifty went aboard *Le Diable*, and Wells and the guard returned to the white schooner. All sail was made on both vessels, and they drew steadily away from each other.

James had his twenty prisoners lined up before him, inspected them, threatened them with the plank, and then won their gratitude by enlisting them all. Slim Sam was his first mate; and together they appointed Welsh Owen second mate, George Tizard third mate and boatswain, a quartermaster, two gun-captains, and the lad Henry Todd to the post of gunner's mate.

"We are well rid of that wooden-headed peacock, Trimmer," said Slim Sam to Burnham, rubbing his thin hands together.

James glanced at him from under a

drooped lid, smiled, but did not speak. The two retired to the cabin and looked over a chart. At noon James found the schooner's position. He had learned the science of navigation from Wells. Then *Le Diable's* course was altered.

Two days later *Le Diable* splashed an anchor in a secluded harbor, and the work of painting her hull snow-white to the water-line was commenced. Her name was painted out and she was touched up cleverly here and there so as to look exactly like Trimmer's schooner. She soon put to sea again, and immediately set about adding to the terrible reputation of the Wasp.

Slim Sam treated James Burnham with the utmost friendliness and respect; and while he patted James with the palm of his hand, figuratively speaking, he constantly slapped the absent Trimmer with the back of it.

He talked a great deal about John Trimmer. He was sorry to have to confess that Trimmer was not only a hog, but a dishonest hog. Trimmer thought of nothing but lining his own nest. He distrusted John Trimmer; and so on, and so on.

XIV

THE white schooner's reputation grew by leaps and bounds. Seamen called her the Wasp and cursed her as they named her. The evil one was aboard her surely, for yesterday she was seen off St. Vincent and to-day she was reported off Martinique. Major Deck and Duval were not worth worrying about now that this white menace was darting from one end of that terror-stricken sea to the other at a speed that no mortal vessel could accomplish.

The governor of Nevis and Commander Scovil believed only one-quarter of what they heard, but the Tartar got her anchor up again and sailed out on her third cruise. She had drawn blanks twice; but this time she drew Major Deck. A short fight followed a long chase. The Tartar put back to Nevis with the material for a score of hangings ironed in her hold and her own wounded in the cockpit. Alexander Burnham, who had been seriously wounded in the neck while boarding Deck's schooner, was carried straight up to Government House by his excellency's orders.

Thanks to the skill of Mr. Willis and the care of Elizabeth Nash, Alexander was on his feet again within two weeks of the fight. But he had to thank Elizabeth for

more than his health. He had confessed his love for her, fearfully, humbly.

Well, she loved him! She told him frankly that she did not care a snap of the fingers about his family disgrace in the person of James. She loved him, not his family. She said that if all his brothers took to dishonest ways and his father to piracy, she would continue to love him.

Alexander was deeply moved and felt grateful to the fellow who had slashed him in the neck and so, indirectly, had brought about this sweet understanding. But, in spite of his joy, his family pride prompted him to point out to her that it was scarcely possible for more than one member of a family of the Burnhams' position in the world to fall from grace in the same century.

He also explained that poor James, though a disgrace to the Burnhams of Burnham, would be a credit to many families for his courage and good manners alone. Family loyalty was so strong in the sailor that he could not overlook it, even at the moment of Elizabeth's confession of love. Elizabeth understood, and loved him the more for it.

While Alexander healed his neck and his heart at Government House, the Tartar sailed away without him on her fourth quest for pirates. Two days out from Nevis, south bound, Commander Scovil awoke one morning to find a large brig on the horizon to windward. He knew her for a war-ship at a glance, and a second glance convinced him that she was a French twenty-two.

The Tartar carried four light guns to a broadside, two heavy guns forward and two aft. She was a large sloop, and formidable as a sloop; but she was intended for hunting pirates, not for fighting men-o'-war. So the reefs were let out of her huge mainsail, her topsails were spread, and every head-sail was run up. The two dipping, swaying vessels were blown merrily across the ruffled sea under a blue and fleckless sky; and it soon became apparent that the larger vessel was being blown a little faster than the smaller by the piping trade-wind.

The brig had the heels of the sloop, but the chase promised to be a long one. Several hours before noon a third sail appeared on that vast stage, this one over the shimmering horizon to leeward. It grew swiftly, working up the wind toward the

chase. To Scovil's anxious glass it soon disclosed itself as a schooner, low and spotless, white of hull, and heavily sparred.

The schooner came on until she was within half a mile of the sloop. Then she swung to the right and fled away across the wind. The curious and anxious watchers aboard the Tartar could see the gaily besashed and armed fellows on her long decks and the gleam of the big, un-jacketed gun in her bows.

"It is that confounded Wasp, as I live!" exclaimed Scovil to a midgy at his elbow. "We've found her at last; but I fear we'll derive little satisfaction from the discovery. She'll hang off and on to watch the fun, I suppose; but there'll be no pickings for her after the Frenchman has done with us."

"The Frenchman has to catch us before he can pluck us, sir," replied the hopeful and courageous reefer. "And maybe, even if he does catch us, he'll find our feathers hard to pull."

Scovil patted the lad kindly on the shoulder.

"Something may turn up," he said with a smile. "If nothing else does, our toes are sure to!"

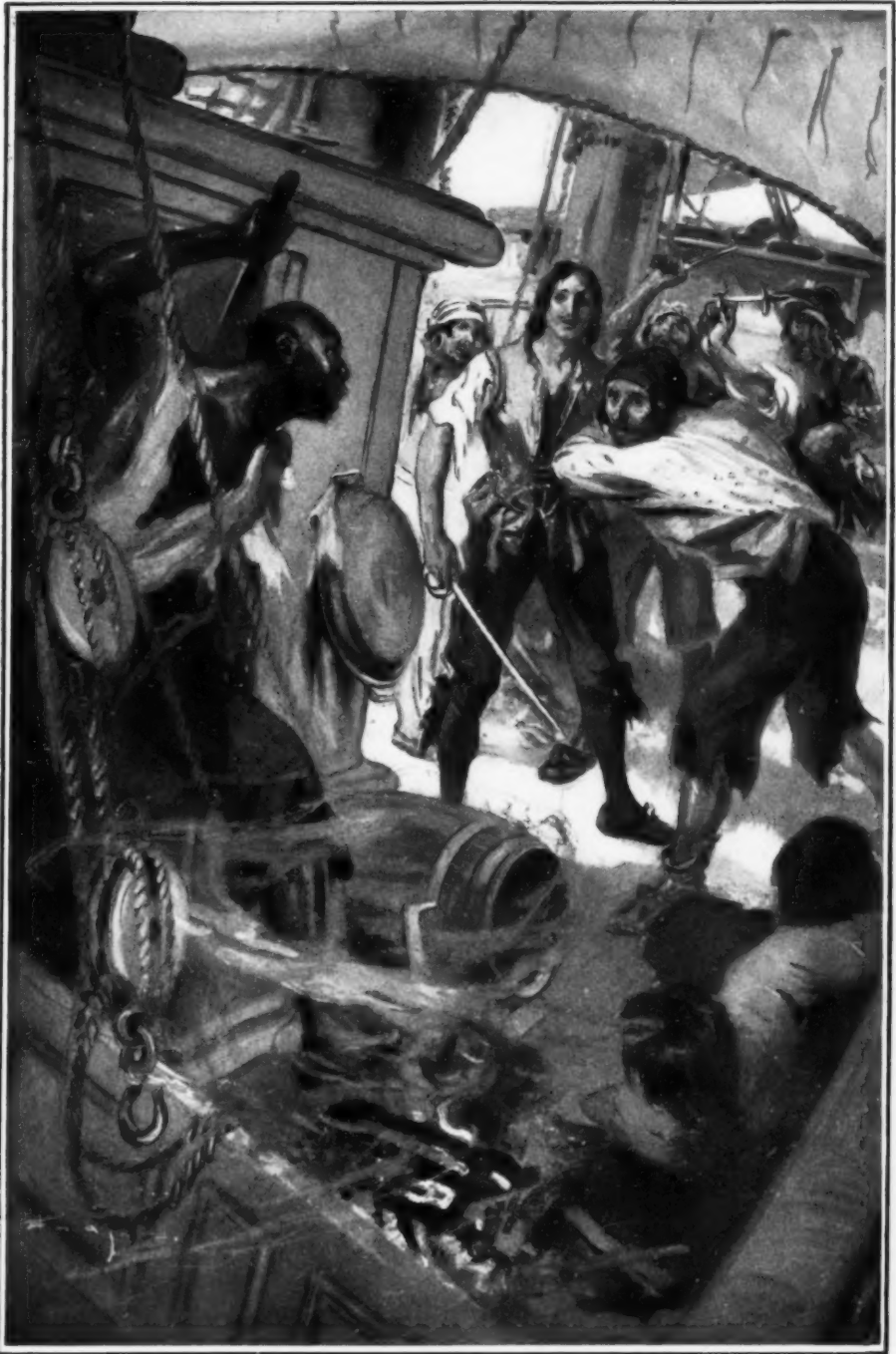
All day the big brig continued to over-haul the sloop; and the white schooner, which had gone about, continued to run neck and neck with the quarry down the wind not more than half a mile away. The sun went down, the moon came up, and the Tartar continued to run desperately against hope.

Sky and sea were clear of any cloud or hint of mist. When the moon had run her course the stars were like lamps. The Tartar was cleared for action before dawn. All hands had an early breakfast, at which rum was served, and then went to their stations.

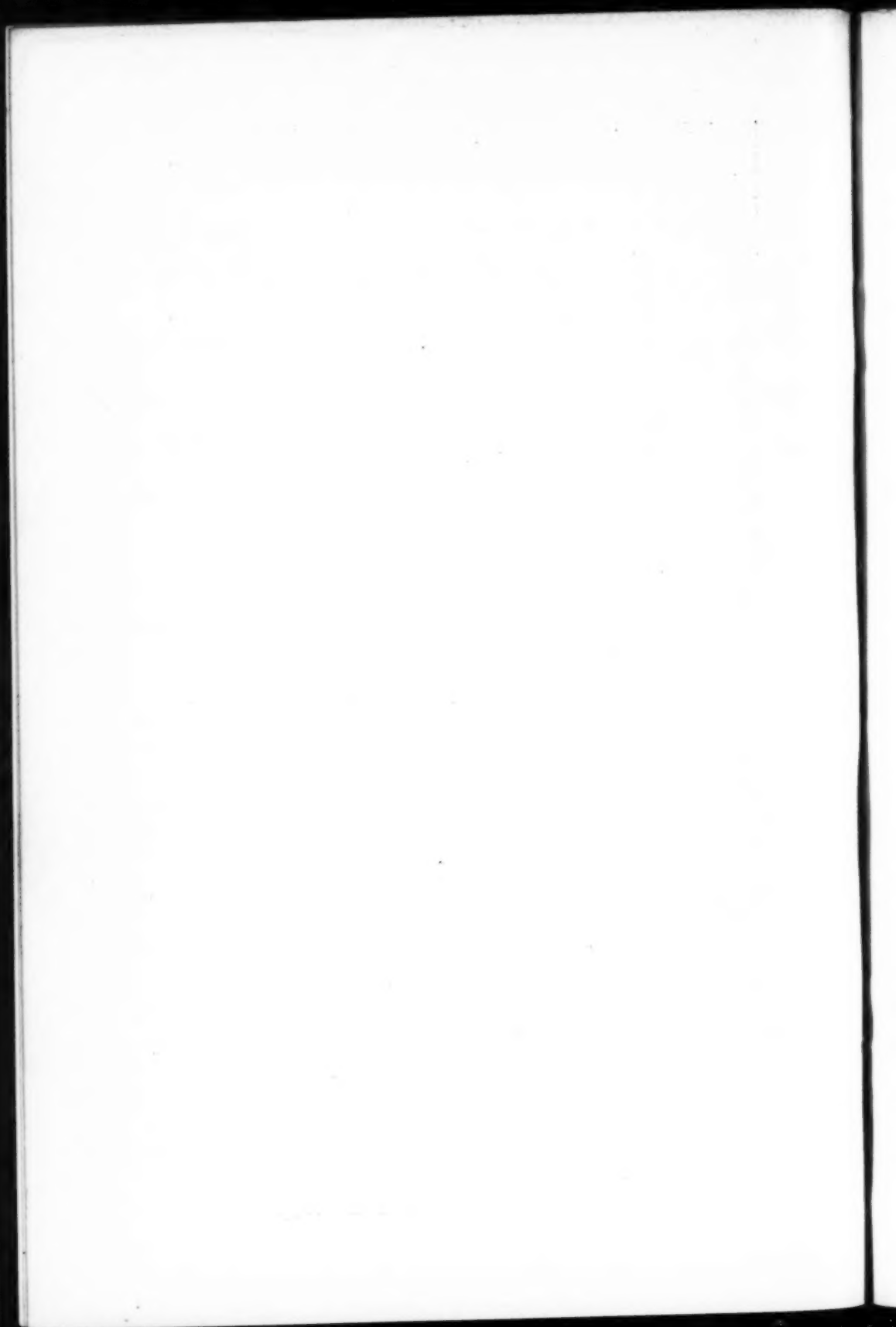
The guns were loaded and shot were heated. The brave fellows joked as they awaited daylight and death, though all but the youngsters knew that the chances of a sloop fighting off a twenty-two-gun brig were not two in a hundred.

Dawn broke, showing the brig astern of the sloop and within a quarter of a mile of her, and the white schooner about a quarter of a mile off the brig's port bow.

"What in the world is that fellow about?" asked Scovil. "He's lying close to the danger zone, and may get his fingers scorched. Let us pray that he will!"



HALF A DOZEN KNIVES WERE THROWN, AND THOUGH TWO OF THEM FOUND THEIR MARK, THE
MADDENED NEGRO NEITHER HALTED NOR SWERVED



Just then the Frenchman let fly with his bow guns. The sloop replied from her taffrail. The smoke of the guns clung white and low to the little waves and was gradually spread by the wind. The schooner sheered off.

Half an hour passed without another shot. Then the brig, now on the sloop's quarter, swung and delivered a broadside. The Tartar staggered, but replied. The schooner, half a mile away, let a puff of smoke out of her nose. Scovil saw it, but had no time to think about it. He swung, and hulled the brig with his heavy stern-pieces.

Ten minutes later he lost his topmast and a dozen men. Crippled, he knew that he was now at the brig's mercy. She would take her position and rake the unfortunate sloop from stem to stern; but he fought on, at the same time clearing the wreckage of top-hamper from the deck.

In a lull in the firing of his own guns he was astonished to see the French brig's foretop sway and crash down. He did not stop to wonder at it, but crawled across the brig's bows and put four red-hot shot into her and a score of bullets into her open ports. Then, as he drew away, he gave her a rap with his heavy metal aft.

The brig's maintop went by the board. The sloop, sadly splintered, and with a third of her crew dead or wounded, drew away from her big antagonist as fast as her crippled condition would permit.

The white schooner, now about a quarter of a mile away from the brig, calmly continued her target-practise with her big bow-chaser and the brig as her target. She shifted her ground constantly. The brig returned her attentions somewhat wildly. The schooner seemed to possess a very fine gun and an exceptional gunner.

Commander Scovil thanked Heaven for the amazing thing that had happened and took full advantage of it. He supposed that the schooner held some particular grudge against the French frigate and had chosen this as a fairly safe time to try to settle it. However that might be, he did not feel that his duty lay with either the pirate or the French war-ship, but with his own sloop and his own men. So he did what he could for his wounded men and his wounded top-hamper and then crawled slowly away from the field of action.

To his astonishment and chagrin the schooner left its game of demolishing the

brig at long range and came swiftly after him. It overhauled the sloop at a clipping pace. Scovil sent his men back to their stations. The men of the white schooner swarmed into the rigging and lined the rail and cheered. Scovil, sorely puzzled, cautioned his men not to fire cannon or musket unless they first saw some threatening sign aboard the schooner.

The schooner passed so close to the sloop that a tall man on her poop was able to throw a bottle onto the sloop's deck.

Four days later the Tartar crawled into the harbor of Nevis under a makeshift topmast, with splintered bulwarks and a patched hull. Her wounded were carried ashore. Her dead had already gone to their deep-sea grave.

Her anchors were scarcely down before Alexander Burnham came aboard, eager to hear what adventure had befallen his ship and his shipmates. He met the commander at the side, all ready to go ashore in the gig and report the engagement to the governor. The two shook hands warmly; then Scovil put a hand under Burnham's elbow and entered the cabin with him. He led the way to his own.

Scovil was Alexander's senior by a few years—a slender man with a long, thin face and pensive eyes. He was swarthy as a Spaniard, almost foppish in his dress, played on more than one musical instrument with sentiment as well as dexterity, and wrote verses. He was a good seaman and a courageous fighter, and had fairly won his promotion. He told his friend the story of the remarkable battle with the French brig, watching the other's face all the while with a curious, tender glance.

"So the pirate got you out of that scrape!" said Alexander. "The notorious Wasp is an Englishman, then. I take off my hat to him."

"He saved the sloop and the life of every man of us who is alive to-day," replied Scovil gravely. "Yes, he is an Englishman—and I owe him a debt which I fear I shall never be able to repay."

"But why did he throw the bottle aboard the sloop?" asked Burnham.

"There was a letter in it."

"A letter? That should be interesting reading."

"I have not read it, my dear lad. I have not broken the seal—and it is fastened with a very good one. It is addressed to you, Alexander."

"To me?" cried Burnham, suddenly paling and shaking. "To me, sir? What can that mean? Let me have it!"

Scovil produced a small, crumpled packet from an inner pocket. He held it in his hand, and the other read the following inscription on the face of it:

To Alexander Burnham, Esq., Royal Navy,
Sloop-of-War Tartar.

Scovil turned the packet over, and Alexander beheld the Burnham arms stamped on the back of it in several places in red wax. Then the commander passed the letter over to his senior lieutenant, turned his back, and looked out of the little port at a patch of glistening sea.

Scovil heard the breaking of the dry wax, the rustling of paper. He heard a faint groan and again the rustling of the paper. Silence followed. He continued to stand and look out at the patch of glistening sea for fully ten minutes; then he spoke, without turning.

"Anything important, Alexander?" he asked in a pinched voice.

He got no answer to the question; so he turned slowly and beheld Burnham leaning heavily against the closed door. The lieutenant's eyes stared straight ahead, wide and unseeing. His face was colorless as death; his lower jaw sagged, and his lips were twisted in an expression of utter misery. His right hand, hanging limp at his side, clutched the letter.

Scovil sprang forward with a cry of concern and slipped an arm about his friend's shoulders.

"What is it?" he asked; and yet he knew, for he had guessed. "Burn it," he continued. "It shall go no farther, lad. Tell me nothing. Let me fetch a light from the galley, and some brandy. Come over here, lad, and lie in my berth until I get back—and put that in your pocket."

Alexander trembled, set his jaws, and stood straight. He looked at his friend fixedly for a second, then with a quick warmth in his eyes.

"God bless you, Peter," he said. "But no—no, I may not burn it yet. You must read it, and Elizabeth Nash must read it. Must I quit the service of my country? Must the world know of our disgrace? It is for you to read this thing and tell me, as my commanding officer and as my friend."

"I tell you now, lad, that there is no

more cause for you to leave the service than for me to leave it," replied Scovil. "As for the world—why, the deuce take it! Let me burn the thing. You can tell me what you wish—or tell me nothing."

"Read it," said Alexander, pressing the letter into Scovil's hand.

This is what Scovil read:

MY DEAR ALEXANDER:

I am glad to have been of some service to you and their gracious majesties to-day. I regret that my affairs made it necessary for me to leave Nevis before your arrival. Be good enough to give my warmest and most respectful regards to Captain Nash and his charming daughter.

Miss Elizabeth is beautiful and clever, but of too superior a type of woman to greatly appeal to me. My tastes are low, and that's the truth. When you next communicate with our honored father, kindly let him know that his devoted son James is established in an occupation much better suited to his inherited talents than the exportation of rum and sugar. He will doubtless be pleased to hear that I am following at sea, and with considerable success, the same gentlemanly calling which the founder of our family followed on land in the days of old.

I have the honor to remain, my dear Alexander, your affectionate brother,

JAMES BURNHAM.

Scovil folded the letter and returned it to Alexander.

"I am glad he thought you were aboard," he said. "I owe my life and my ship to that mistake. He is a brave man, but bitter as gall. I prefer a pirate to a coward, lad. Now may I fetch a candle and burn it? Let it end here, Sandy, for Heaven's sake! Your hand, lad."

They shook hands and gazed hard at each other, eye to eye, and each knew that their friendship was stronger than ever.

"I must show it to Elizabeth," said Alexander. "She promised to marry me. I should indeed be a miserable coward—a more despicable character than this unfortunate brother of mine—if I were to hide it from her."

"You are right," replied the commander. "Let her read it, and then destroy it. I'll invent a story to explain the incident of the bottle to the governor and the sloop's company. Now I must go ashore and make my report. We'll go together."

Alexander inquired for Elizabeth and was directed to one of the gardens. She was frightened by his white face and hag-

gard eyes, and ran to him with her hands extended. He held them in his and told her, swiftly and briefly, the story of the sloop's adventure.

Then, freeing her right hand, he pressed the open letter into it. He saw the blood slip away from her cheeks as she read. She finished reading, crushed the letter in her hand, looked up into his face with eyes tender and loving and beautiful beyond words, and flung her arms around his neck. She drew his face slowly down to her own and kissed him on the brow, the eyes, and the lips.

The letter was not burned, but was torn into tiny fragments and buried deep in the warm garden-loam at the roots of a rose-bush.

As Elizabeth still loved him, and was now more anxious to marry him than ever, Alexander Burnham decided that his best plan was to retire from the navy. He possessed a snug property in Berkshire that had come to him from his maternal grandmother. He felt that he owed this step to Elizabeth; and, for his own part, his ardor for pirate-hunting had cooled. He did not relish the prospect of capturing his brother and swinging him from a yard-arm by the neck.

Elizabeth urged him to carry out this plan without delay. She wanted to have her lover safe in England. Glory and the needs of her country seemed small things to her now.

Alexander talked to Scovil, and at last succeeded in bringing the commander around to his way of looking at the matter; so he wrote his resignation and gave it to Scovil to be forwarded, and continued on sick leave until he should receive an answer from the admiralty office.

Elizabeth hurried matters, for she was afraid that James Burnham might disclose himself again in his true colors, next time to some one less discreet than Commander Scovil, and that the governor might object to her marriage with the brother of a pirate. So she decided to take no chances and, without declaring her fears even to her lover, arranged to have the wedding take place at the earliest possible moment.

Within two months of the remarkable sea-fight in which a pirate had come to the help of a king's ship, Elizabeth Nash and Alexander Burnham were married. The governor gave the bride away, Commander Scovil supported the bridegroom, the chap-

lain of the regiment performed the ceremony, and a score of men from the sloop, in command of one of the reefers, formed a guard of honor. The ceremony was followed by a garden-party, a dinner-party, and a ball at Government House.

The young couple took up their abode, for the time, with the bride's father. It was their intention to sail for England at the first opportunity, and Captain Nash would follow them to Berkshire at the expiration of his term of office.

A few days after the wedding the frigate *Thunderous* came into the little harbor from England, by way of the southern islands, with six companies of fresh troops for Nevis and orders to take the old garrison to Boston. Alexander and Elizabeth decided to sail with the frigate. In Boston they would be sure to find a safe ship to take them to England.

Mr. Stanton and Kitty Trimmer were married, very quietly, a day after the arrival of the *Thunderous*. Stanton intended to resign his commission in the army as soon as he reached Boston, and then cross to England and get his hands on the paternal fortune.

XV

JAMES BURNHAM prospered exceedingly. No undertaking of his miscarried. His men piled up plunder twice as fast as they had piled it up when they sailed with John Trimmer. From Slim Sam to the newest recruit they were ready to follow him anywhere.

The engagement with the French warship proved their faith in his prowess and luck. Slim Sam and his other officers advised him constantly to break with Trimmer; but this he refused to do so long as Trimmer kept faith with him.

Several weeks after the engagement with the Frenchman Burnham's schooner ran across Trimmer's schooner off the little island of Barbuda. It seems that John Trimmer's luck had deserted him of late; or perhaps it was that he missed the sage advice of Slim Sam. However that may be, he had suffered several reverses. He had twice been beaten off by heavily gunned merchantmen; and once he had taken a ship after hard fighting and found nothing aboard her but fifty guineas and a cargo of sugar. As he was not in the sugar trade, the cargo was not worth a shilling to him, so his men began to grumble.

Both schooners ran into a quiet cove and their companies went ashore. James Burnham made his report to Captain Trimmer; and upon hearing it, Trimmer's men all voiced their desire to ship with Captain Burnham.

Here was a blow to the ex-highwayman's vanity. Trimmer was furious. He accused James Burnham of treacherous intentions, and demanded his resignation of the command of *Le Diable*. James's retort laid Captain Trimmer on the flat of his back with a broken nose.

A half-hearted mix-up followed, in which half a dozen men were slightly wounded. Then James and his devoted admirers, and a dozen of Trimmer's hearties, went aboard *Le Diable* and sailed away. Thus Trimmer's great scheme fell to the sand.

Trimmer's ambition now was to break James Burnham. He told himself that he had nursed a viper in his bosom.

While the *Thunderous* lay off Bridgetown, Barbados, two weeks before her arrival in Nevis, Captain Robinson received a packet one morning from the hand of a ragged negro boatman. The boatman paddled quickly away from the ship's side immediately after delivering the packet.

Captain Robinson tore off the soiled sailcloth wrapper and found a small, roughly drawn chart of three widely separated islands, and a page of written instructions concerning the habits and hiding-places of "that notorious pyrate in ye white schooner commonly known as the Wasp."

In the charts or instructions there was no mention of that particular retreat in which the beautiful *Hélène* lived, and in the harbor of which the original *Wasp* now lay at anchor, her slender hull newly painted as black as night.

Captain Robinson notified the governor of Barbados of this important communication from the unknown. Two ten-gun brigs which happened to be in the bay were sent to investigate the two nearer retreats, and the *Thunderous* sailed northward.

The *Thunderous* spent only four days in Nevis, then continued her voyage. She headed due east, under easy sail, until sunset, then put about. As she approached the eastern coast of St. Kitts all her lights were extinguished or covered.

Lieutenant Alexander Burnham, who was now a passenger aboard the *Thunderous*, had been taken into Captain Robin-

son's confidence earlier in the day. There was no doubt in Alexander's mind as to the identity of the pirate whom Robinson hoped to take.

"I want to get their leader alive and hang him in Boston," said Robinson, rubbing his hands briskly together. "That'll do more good than stringing him up to my own yard-arm. Feather in my cap, too!"

Alexander was sick at heart. Horror and shame, and pity for Elizabeth and himself—yes, and for James, bit him to the very core of his being. The thought of a Burnham in irons aboard the *Thunderous*, with the crest of the Burnhams on his shoulder for all the world to wonder at and jeer at, went like ice and fire through his brain. How could Elizabeth ever forgive him this public disgrace? How should he himself ever recover from it? How should Sir Walter ever again hold up his head in distant Berkshire?

Then, after black and weary weeks, would follow the public hanging in Boston; but before the hanging would come the trial. Ah, the trial! That would be the hardest and most shameful stage of the terrible proceedings. Already in his mind's eye he saw the gloating populace and the incredulous and austere judge, the curiosity of every one to obtain a closer view of the device on the back of the notorious pirate, the horror and rage on thousands of faces when the story of the prisoner's crimes was told.

And he—perhaps even Elizabeth—would be forced to bear witness that this monster was none other than James Burnham. Perhaps he would be called upon to disclose the device upon his own shoulder.

The *Thunderous* lay to off the black coast, and three cutters, full of armed men, pulled away from her with muffled oars. Alexander Burnham crouched in the bow of one of the cutters. He had left Elizabeth sleeping soundly in their comfortable cabin aboard the frigate. He was dressed like a common seaman, and his face and hands were stained so as to look rough and weather-beaten. He felt that it was hopeless to think of warning James of the attack. He could think of no plan of action; but he was determined that James should not be taken aboard the frigate alive.

The cutters found the entrance to Bottle Harbor and crept silently into the basin. They saw the white schooner like a pale ghost against the blackness of the hills and

the water. Beyond the vague shimmer which they knew to be the schooner's hull they could just detect pale patches which they took to be the white fronts of houses.

Captain Robinson had decided that most of the schooner's company would be sleeping ashore; so two of the boats went ashore and one slid noiselessly alongside the vessel. Alexander was in one of the boats that went ashore.

The little stone houses were surrounded. The doors and windows stood wide open. At the sound of a pistol-shot from the schooner the attack began. Alexander did not join in the assault, but slunk into the jungle near the stranded boats and watched and waited.

The pirates were taken completely by surprise, both ashore and on the schooner. The few who composed the anchor-watch aboard the vessel were quickly overpowered. The ruffians in the houses made a desperate resistance, despite the odds against them. Some escaped to the jungle, some fell fighting, and the rest were disarmed and bound. Three of the frigate's men were killed and half a dozen were wounded.

Now lanterns were lighted and the prisoners were examined. James Burnham, who was one of them, was pointed out as the captain by one of his comrades. Alexander, lurking behind a bush, witnessed the discovery, made by a young lieutenant of the Thunderous, of the device on the pirate's shoulder.

The young lieutenant showed considerable astonishment. Perhaps he had heard something of James Burnham and the design on his back during his brief stay in Nevis. Alexander heard him ask a question, and heard James admit his identity in reply.

The night was cloudy. The two lanterns ashore threw short and feeble bands of yellow light. The prisoners and the wounded were being carried down, muskets and pistols were discharged occasionally in the jungle, and the men of the Thunderous jostled and crowded on the sand near the beached cutters. One of the lanterns was overturned, broken, and the candle extinguished by a careless or designing foot. Some one shouted that the pirate captain had escaped into the jungle.

Confusion reigned for a little while, and the men who had captured the schooner came ashore with torches and lanterns.

The cords with which the pirate commander's wrists and ankles had been bound were found lying on the sand, cleanly cut through. Evidently one of the escaped pirates had crept out of the edge of the jungle, trampled upon the lantern, and cut his captain free. This was the opinion of the officers in command of the war-ship's boats.

A brief and fruitless expedition was made into the jungle. Half an hour later the three boats retired with the captured schooner towing behind them. They reached the frigate before dawn.

Alexander found his wife still sleeping peacefully. He locked the door of the cabin noiselessly, and in the dark divested himself of his scanty and soiled attire. He made the shirt and breeches into a small bundle, weighted the bundle with a pistol and a heavy knife, and dropped it through the port into the sea.

Then he washed his face and hands, donned his night-robe, and retired thankfully to his narrow berth. The shameful tragedy had been averted. He had averted it with his own hand. He thanked God, and presently fell into a peaceful slumber.

When Alexander and Elizabeth awoke and went on deck they beheld the green island of St. Kitts far astern. The white schooner, manned by a prize crew, sailed on the frigate's course half a mile to starboard. Alexander intended to confess all to his wife some day; but just now he told her nothing of the cutting-out expedition of the night.

Suddenly he remembered a thing which he had overlooked in the first joyous flood of relief—to wit, that the pirate captain's identity had become known to the invaders before his escape. He was chilled and shaken for a moment; but he recovered himself quickly. This was bad; but the thing which he had averted, by the mercy of God, was a thousand times worse.

He had done his best for his family, for himself, and for James. He could do no more now than face the humiliating scandal like a man.

Shortly after breakfast Alexander was summoned politely to Captain Robinson's cabin. He found half a dozen other officers with the captain. All looked embarrassed. All shook hands with him, the captain leading.

"We did not get the leader of the pirates aboard—and I'm glad of it, now

that I've thought it over," said Robinson. "We got his schooner and smashed his crew. We drew his sting; and, considering the circumstances, I'm glad we did no more—for your sake."

The color died slowly out of Alexander's face and his glance fell.

"For my sake?" he queried. "What d'ye mean?"

The old sailor explained his meaning, awkwardly, kindly, ramblingly. The notorious pirate who had made a bloody reputation for himself up and down the islands as the Wasp was a Burnham. He had that on his back which proved it; and he had admitted that he was none other than James Burnham, the same who had lived for some time on Nevis. Of course, the men knew about it and would talk; but Captain Robinson and the officers would keep their mouths shut on the subject, and no official announcements of the Wasp's identity would be made.

Captain Robinson and the six officers present were all very sorry for Alexander, spoke of the respect in which the Burnham family was held, and hoped that Alexander would not allow the behavior of his brother to prey upon his mind.

Alexander listened with an ashen face and veiled eyes. He thanked the captain and the other gentlemen in a dull voice. He glanced around at the pitying faces. Pity! Pity was ever a dose to offend a Burnham gullet. What had he, Alexander, ever done to provoke pity? And perhaps some of this pity was not entirely unmixed with scorn. And it might be that some of these polite and mournful gentlemen even pitied Elizabeth for having married a Burnham.

James was a black disgrace to his family. James deserved hanging by the neck. But, by Heaven, there was something to be said in James's favor!

"I suspected something of the kind," said Alexander. "I knew that James had gone wrong. In fact, I knew that he had—had taken to this hellish trade. You have all heard about the Tartar's fight with the French twenty-two, and of the white schooner that came into the affair and saved the sloop? That was this same brother of mine. He threw a letter aboard in a bottle, with his name to it; but Scovil kept it quiet, for my sake. I showed the letter to my wife—she was not my wife then—and she destroyed it. He came to

the help of the Tartar—and though he deserves hanging a dozen times over, he has that affair to his credit. That is all, gentlemen. You will forgive me, I know, for attempting to show that this infamous brother of mine is a shade less infamous than other murderers and robbers. I thank you again for your consideration."

From the climbing jungles around Bottle Harbor the scattered survivors of James Burnham's crew gathered upon the sand.

"They got the cap'n," said one. "I seen 'em throw him an' tie him. If it wasn't for that, we'd be afloat agin inside the month in a new ship."

"Aye," said another with a blistering oath. "An' inside six weeks we'd be cuttin' the heart out o' the carcass o' that treacherous John Trimmer—for it was him set the king's ship onto us. Aye, if they hadn't took Burnham, we'd git John Trimmer yet. Or even if Slim Sam hadn't got his gizzard slit; but no, Slim wasn't no fighter, though he was a fine scholard."

At that moment James Burnham emerged from the jungle, where he had been lying on his back for hours, planning for the future and communing with his blackened soul. He joined the disconsolate group of twelve.

"Here I am, lads," he said. "We'll settle our score with John!"

XVI

THE men on the beach gaped at James Burnham as if he were a visitor from beyond the grave.

Young Henry Todd was the first to recover his wits. He sprang to James and embraced him. At that the others got to their feet and crowded around their hero. James received their rude and blasphemous expressions of congratulation and pleasure, and their questions concerning his escape, with an ironical, slanted smile. His hard eyes were softened a little by an expression as of weariness.

"It was my brother who cut me free, lads," he said; "Lieutenant Burnham, no less. He trod on the lantern and then cut my bonds; but I saw his face before he smashed the light. That's what family pride will do, lads. It'll drive a king's officer to setting free a bloody pirate."

"An' maybe it wasn't all for pride's sake he done it," said one of the ruffians, a huge fellow with a fresh wound on his low forehead and a little gold cross sus-

pended from his thick, blood-stained neck and gleaming on his hairy chest. "Ye done him a good turn, cap'n, when ye saved him an' his sloop from the French brig. Yerself an' him be brothers; an' blood bes thicker nor water!"

James laughed dryly.

"Rip me if I don't believe ye're a sentimentalist, Tom Croft," he said. "But however that may be, you should know all about the thickness of blood."

"Where've ye been ever since, sir?" asked Todd.

"I've been lying in the bush," replied James, "meditating on my sins and on the instability of human life and fortune, and trying to plan some way of coming speedily to a meeting with John Trimmer."

Such of the pirates' plunder as had been hidden near Bottle Harbor was found undisturbed in its hole in the ground. This deposit was a veritable treasure—gold and jewelry and silver to the value of a dozen comfortable fortunes. It was tied up in small sacks of stout sail-cloth, and these bags were stowed away in strong oaken chests.

"We'll shift this," said James. "Trimmer may give us the slip and call in here while we are away looking for him."

So a new hiding-place was found, and the treasure transferred to it. And now it was time to take the first step toward finding Trimmer and settling their account with him.

Their resources, excepting the buried treasure, consisted of two bags of sea-biscuits which had survived the general destruction by fire and sword, a small boat which had escaped the notice of the cutters-out, a dry cave well stored with arms and ammunition, and an unlimited supply of fresh fruit and fresh water.

The numerical strength of the company was thirteen, including the commander. Twelve of these gentry were in the pink of physical condition, barring a few minor wounds; but one of them, Bill Hook by name, was suffering from an intermittent fever. A man of something about forty years was this Hook, red of head and whiskers, and reduced almost to bone and skin by the gnawings of his disease.

"Thirteen," said Tom Croft, with an eye on poor Bill Hook. "There bain't no luck in thirteen save devilish bad luck. It be flyin' into the face of things to set out after Trimmer with a company o' thirteen!"

Bill Hook trembled and swore and plucked at his red beard with a clawlike hand. The others turned curious, leering faces toward him.

"I don't hold with these old wives' tales," said James Burnham. "I leave such for blundering swabs like John Trimmer. John was afraid of the number thirteen as he's afraid of me. John would never get his anchor up on a Friday, nor have a black cat aboard, nor look at a new moon without turning his money over in his breeches-pocket. And what has luck done for the dog? He enjoyed some fool luck until a better man came along—and there it ended. Who is the captain you lads chose to follow, of your own free will—John Trimmer or Jim Burnham? Aye, Jim Burnham. You're ready to follow Trimmer now—to slit his dirty throat when you overhaul him. What's all this infernal superstition done for that white-livered hound?"

"He's got his ship, cap'n, an' he's got his full crew; an' ye ain't got neither," replied Tom Croft.

"Aye," returned James with a dangerous, slow smile which caused the thick skin on the back of Croft's neck to twitch and creep. "Aye, Tom, he's got his schooner, and he's got his full crew; and here am I with twelve men left of my crew and a fourteen-foot boat. But can you name me ten lads o' his crew who wouldn't leave him and come to me at a whistle? Not you, Tom Croft. And how will his new moons and his old wives' tales serve him when we slip into his harbor some dark night and you go over the rail o' the schooner and into the forecastle and tell the lads that Captain Burnham is waiting alongside to take command and cut out Trimmer's stinking heart? How'll the luck fall then?"

"Aye, sir, ye'll have the wind o' him if ye ever come up with him; but we won't never go over the rail o' the white schooner if we sail a company o' thirteen. Thirteen has done for many a stout mate o' mine, cap'n."

"And if you let me hear any more o' your silly babbling it will bring yourself to a violent and sudden death," retorted James with a snarl in his voice and a glitter in his eye.

Though Tom Croft was cowed into silence, he was not satisfied; and several other members of the little company mis-

trusted the number thirteen as keenly as he did. They whispered together whenever the captain's eye was not upon them. James knew, of course, that they meant to reduce the unlucky number of the company by one; and he knew, as well as Bill Hook knew, that the reduction would be made at poor Bill's expense. This knowledge amused James; but it did not amuse Bill Hook to any extent.

Though slightly amused by the ignorance of his followers, the captain said nothing more to the discredit of ancient superstitions. He set them briskly at work. Two oaken breakers were filled and stowed in the boat. Fruit, the two bags of biscuits, arms, and ammunition were put aboard. Then James Burnham explained his plan of campaign.

They would follow the coast northward for a distance of twelve or fifteen miles, and then, under cover of darkness, slip into the cove of a little French fishing village that he had sighted more than once from his schooner's deck. There they would supply themselves with the largest and best of the fishing-boats and such provisions as the place could offer. This done, they would turn about and sail to Nevis, where, in a little port which he had often noticed when he lived on that island, they would be sure to find an interisland trading-schooner that would serve their purpose. Perhaps they would pick up half a dozen recruits, if it could be done quietly; but he was anxious not to attract attention and so let the word get about that he was still at large.

This done, they would make a comfortable voyage to that hidden harbor where, as it was only reasonable to suppose, John Trimmer the traitor still lay in retirement with his fine white schooner and the beautiful *Helène*.

The plan was well received. As the day was now near its end, it was decided that the little expedition should leave Bottle Harbor at the first lift of dawn. They did not build a fire that night, for fear that the ship that had sent in the boats had left watchers somewhere near at hand.

They retired to the hills above the harbor to sleep. The fact that Bill Hook did not lie down with them escaped their notice in the dark.

Bill was not more than fifty yards away from the resting-place of the twelve. He lay down on the warm loam and shook

with the ague-chills of his fever. The sickness passed in time, leaving him deathly weak and fatigued for an hour. He got to his feet at last and leaned against a tree. He drew his knife from its sheath and felt edge and point with a calloused thumb. He reasoned with himself dully, slowly, clawing his red beard all the while with fingers like yellow bones.

Thirteen was an unlucky number. The number of their company would be reduced to twelve before dawn, for Tom Croft intended to knife him in the dark. Yes, he quite agreed with Croft that thirteen was a bad number for any party setting out on an adventurous undertaking. But he considered it unfair of his mates to take it for granted that the reduction should be made by eliminating him, because he happened to be suffering from a touch of fever.

He, Bill Hook, was still a good man, he'd have them know, even if he wasn't hog-fat and ruddy as a dairymaid. He'd live to see them all cut down or aswing! He was as good a sailorman as Tom Croft, he was, and just as bloody a pirate, though maybe not so dirty and brutish in his habits. He'd just put Tom Croft away, that he would, instead of letting Tom put him away.

No self-respecting gentleman of fortune could do less. He didn't hold with knifing messmates as a general rule, but he considered this to be a very exceptional case.

The twelve slumbered deeply in the dark of that high jungle. Poor Bill Hook crawled around them and among them, unseen and unheard. He paused frequently to listen to the breathing of his mates, sometimes to pass inquiring, feather-light finger-tips over an unconscious breast.

At last his fingers encountered the little gold cross which adorned the hairy bosom of Tom Croft. In his right hand he held his heavy knife, which was keen of edge and point.

Bill Hook was a practical anatomist. The red spirit of Croft the sentimentalist fled his stalwart carcass without so much as a grunt.

Owing to his weakened condition, Bill experienced no little difficulty in getting the dead body away without awakening the eleven sleepers. He managed it at last, however, in the sweat of his yellow brow. He was fortunate enough to find a deep hole in the floor of the forest within a few hundred yards of the scene of the opera-

tion, and into this he stowed the corpse of the defender of superstitions.

The fateful number had claimed its victim; and the red-headed instrument of fate cleaned his knife and his hands, returned to his sleeping comrades, and lay down peacefully beside the captain.

All were astir at daybreak—all except Tom Croft. Several of them were tactless enough to look at poor Bill Hook, who was just having his morning chills, as if they had not expected to see him. They hallooed for Tom, but only the echoes answered them. They looked again at Bill; and Bill smiled painfully back at them despite the chattering of his teeth.

"Dead of his own physic!" exclaimed one. "Bill got 'im."

James Burnham laughed.

"If Tom is dead," he said, "then he's got his own silly superstition to thank for it. Now we are twelve; and there's the end o' it."

"Tom was in the right o' it, anyhow," said one of the men. "He said as how thirteen was unlucky, an' now he's proved it. Where'd ye plant 'im, Bill? Tom Croft an' me was good friends, we was, an' he owed me a mite o' money, he did—just about what that there little cross would square. Pipe up, matey, so's I can go an' take a last sight o' Tom's pore remains. Where'd ye put him to?"

"Stow that!" said James sharply. "We've no time for collecting debts from the dead. It's the livin' we're concerned with."

The little boat crawled northward along the coast for several hours. When the sun was high the voyagers went ashore and hid the craft. Six of the company, including the captain, set out on foot to spy upon the village.

The boat was launched and manned again immediately after sunset. The quiet cove where the fishing-boats rode at their stone anchors was entered two hours later. The village slumbered peacefully. No dog barked even when the adventurers went ashore in search of provisions.

James Burnham's luck was with him. Some rough provisions were found in an unguarded storehouse and carried down to the boat. Then the best craft of the little fleet was provisioned and manned. The anchor was brought noiselessly aboard. Oars were muffled and manned, and the pride of the fleet stole out of the cove like

a dark ghost, with the open boat towing astern.

Clear of the cove, the patched sail was hoisted. The voyagers beat up to windward for a couple of hours, then headed due south. A chill caught Bill Hook and rattled his teeth.

The affair of the trading-schooner proved to be a trifle more difficult than the affair of the fishing-boat, but the daring voyagers transferred themselves from the fishing-boat to the decked fore-and-after within sixty hours of the theft of the former craft.

The little trader's anchor-watch, numbering three, had put up a slight resistance and had suffered extermination. One of Burnham's company had been killed; but as it happened to be poor Bill Hook, it did not matter much.

And now they squared away on what they hoped would be the last stage of their progressive voyage.

They sailed southward for a day and a night and a day, and on a morning of pearl and gold and pink, off the Saints' Passage, they sighted a small brig to leeward of them, and also heading south. James studied the brig through his glass for a moment, then called Henry Todd to him and handed him the glass.

"Tell me if you ever saw that craft before," he said.

The lad looked, then gave vent to a rattling volley of oaths.

"The Vartue!" he exclaimed. "The Boston brig Vartue!"

James nodded, and called his reduced company to him. He told them what he knew of the brig Virtue, and he propounded an elaboration of his original plan. It might well be, so he said, that a night attack on John Trimmer's stronghold would fail. Perhaps John had wormed and blustered his way back into the confidence of the majority of his crew by this time.

Even if this were not the case, the mischief might be done before he, James, had proved his identity. One minute of ignorance on the part of Trimmer's hundred might mean the extermination of Burnham's eleven. He was willing to risk it, of course; but, first of all, he would like to lay a new plan before his comrades.

There sailed the brig Virtue; and, unless she had changed her skipper and her mate since he and Henry Todd had been aboard her, there sailed a brig ripe and ready for their purpose. He was ready to stake his

reputation on the assertion that, with Smith and Winch still bullying, starving, and overworking the crew, eighty per cent of the men would be glad to become gentlemen of fortune. In that case it would be a small matter to get possession of the brig and a likely lot of recruits.

Then they would sail the tublike brig down to within sight of John Trimmer's lookouts, the very picture of a helpless merchantman. Out John would come, unable to resist so easy a prize, and lay the white schooner alongside without loss of time or ammunition. He knew John's way of dealing with an easy proposition.

Then, even while the boarders were coming up the brig's side, he would declare himself and proclaim Trimmer's treachery. Should this fail to excite a demonstration on his behalf aboard the white schooner, and he vowed that it would not fail utterly, then the hidden bombs and grenades would be thrown over the brig's rail upon the schooner's deck, and in the ensuing confusion and consternation he would follow the explosives with the heroic ten and the New England recruits at his back.

Perhaps James Burnham's reasoning powers carried his argument; but it is more likely that his reputation for courage and success, assisted by a craving for bloodshed in every one of those dread hearts, brought his ten followers to his view.

The brig *Virtue* was a slow sailer, blunt of build and foul of bottom. Captain Smith examined the shabby little fore-and-after through his glass and felt no premonition of disaster. An ordinary French interisland trading-schooner was all he saw, with three ragged fellows on her narrow deck, a chicken-coop lashed at the foot of the mainmast, half a dozen rum-casks lashed in her scuppers, and a peaceful, wind-snatched wisp of smoke trailing away from the pipe of her little galley.

"There comes what we be a lookin' for," he said to Mr. Winch. "Rum an' fowls at a bargain, an' maybe some tobacco. She'll be up with us afore noon."

"An' maybe a keg of French brandy," said Winch, chuckling. "D'ye call to mind the brandy we got from the little French trader last v'yage, not fifty miles from this same spot? A keg of it, a dozen fowls, a suckin' pig, an' a thousand seegars from the Brazils."

"Aye," replied Smith, with a reminiscent eye on the humble craft astern. "Aye,

Mr. Mate; but I don't rightly recollect what them same welcome provisions cost us."

"Them cost us a polite good-day-to-ye," returned Mr. Winch; and at this sally of wit the two mariners laughed heartily.

The shabby but speedy fore-and-after was within hailing distance of the brig by noon. A scantily clad fellow hailed the *Virtue* from the smaller craft's bowsprit, inquiring in broken English if the master of the brig would let him have some good salt fish in exchange for rum, molasses, tobacco, or brandy. Captain Smith winked at his mate and replied to the Frenchman that he had some very superior salt fish in his hold and would be glad to do business.

The brig was laid to. The little fore-and-after came alongside very cleverly, letting her mainsail and foresail belly down to the deck at the very moment that Mr. Winch heaved her a line. There was no sea running.

The two vessels lay side to side. The fellow who had hailed the brig mounted the schooner's rail and scrambled up the brig's side. He wore nothing but a soiled shirt, soiled canvas breeches, and a wide sash of red silk. His legs and feet were bare and weather-stained. He announced himself as Pierre Hatte, master of *La Belle Marie*. His hair was black and his eyes dark and quick. His real name was David Jones.

The bargaining proceeded slowly, for M. Hatte possessed very little English and Captain Smith no French at all.

XVII

SMITH refused to show his fish until the rum and brandy were brought aboard the brig, so a large keg of rum and a small keg of brandy were hoisted out of the fore-and-after and up the brig's side.

This M. Hatte was evidently a simpleton. When Smith invited him into the cabin he went. Mr. Winch entered the cabin also. The captain served rum and water in earthenware mugs, and all three sat down at the table. The visitor produced two heavy knives from the folds of his sash, one in each hand.

"Ye took me for a French trader, did ye?" he said. "Up with yer flippers! I be a bloody pirate, and one o' the Wasp's company. Sit where ye be, mates!"

Captain Smith and Mr. Winch held their hands above their heads and stared

at their guest with horrified eyes. Their lips were twisted in sickly, mirthless grins. David Jones was now on his feet.

"I'd kill ye meself, but for fear o' offending Cap'n Burnham," he said pleasantly. "I got an idee as how the cap'n wants to slit yer gullets with his own hand. Hark to that! Sit still, curse ye!"

Smith was already on his feet, with his right hand encircling one of the heavy stoneware mugs; but before he could lift the mug to throw it, David Jones threw both his knives. Smith screamed and crashed down across the table with one knife embedded in his throat and one in his abdomen.

Winch snatched up a three-legged stool and hurled it at Jones, vaulted the table and the still quivering clay of the shipmaster, and dashed from the cabin and up the short ladder to the deck. But there his flight ended—with James Burnham's sword through him, and the silver hilt of it within four inches of his breast-bone.

The half-hearted resistance of the brig's crew had been practically overcome before Winch's sudden and terrific extinction. Only the huge negro cook continued to fight. He had seen and recognized Henry Todd, and so had shrewdly guessed that surrender would benefit him not at all. He had heard Burnham's shouted offer of life and fortune for every man who surrendered without striking a blow, but he remembered his treatment of the boy Todd, and knew that the generous offer, even if genuine, would not apply to him.

He was a bully of two hundred and twenty pounds in weight of muscle and bone, and a favorite pastime of his had been to clout sailormen over the head with a skillet when they came to the door of the galley for food. This joke had always amused Smith and Winch. So the cook retired to his galley and proceeded to defend it against all comers.

The galley had one window, and the first man to attempt to fire a pistol through this window received a gallon of boiling water in his face. The door was shattered, but so appalling was the outburst of hot water, scalding food, and iron that the besiegers drew away from the breach.

The galley filled with smoke. Henry Todd mounted the roof and speedily hacked a hole through the thin timber. Smoke poured up through the rent. Six pistols were passed up to Todd, who

methodically discharged all of them through the hole in the roof.

"He'll 'ave the brig afire!" cried some one. "He's upstot the stove!"

James ordered water to be passed up over the side and thrown upon the galley. Half a dozen of the brig's old crew hastened to obey the order. Suddenly the splinters of the door were driven outward and the iron fire-box of the stove, with fire in its belly, was hurled through the smoking maw. It struck a member of the bucket-brigade full in the chest and hurled him to the deck crushed and burned.

After the stove came the huge negro himself, with a bar of iron in his right hand, his left arm hanging limp, and blood streaming down his face. He brained the wounded and prostrate New Englander, then dashed at James Burnham. Half a dozen knives were thrown, and though two of them found their mark, the maddened negro neither halted nor swerved. Burnham had his straight sword in his hand. He sprang lightly aside, turned quicker than it can be told, and lunged with all his weight behind the silver hilt.

That was the end of the Virtue's gigantic cook.

The fire in the shattered deck-house was extinguished. The brig had been taken with comparatively little bloodshed, thanks to the mutinous condition of her crew. In all, only seven of her original company had been killed, including Smith, Winch, the cook, and the fellow whom the cook had crushed with the stove.

One of Burnham's fellows was dying from a scalded face and throat, and two were slightly wounded. So the brig's company now numbered twenty—ten old pirates and ten new.

James addressed all hands. He had a trick of argument that never failed to convince ignorant and unscrupulous mariners that the life of a gentleman of fortune was the only one worth living, and that the sure way of succeeding as a gentleman of fortune was to follow James Burnham.

He spoke briefly, touched lightly on a few of his most amazing deeds, and referred his new comrades to David Jones, Henry Todd, and others for further particulars. Then he spoke of the work and rewards of the immediate future. He explained that, to overthrow the traitor John Trimmer, they might have to increase their company by a score or so from Trimmer's

crew. But what mattered a score, more or less, when treasure enough to make five hundred men wealthy for life lay waiting to be distributed?

He was cheered as heartily by the recruits as by the old hands. The honest fellows among the recruits—and there were several such—were delighted to know that they would not be called upon to fight against their own kind, but against a treacherous pirate.

It was five days after the capture of the brig *Virtue* by the indefatigable James Burnham that a lookout on the hills behind John Trimmer's harbor descended with word that a brig was crawling southward along the coast. This was welcome news to Trimmer, for he had been having trouble of late with certain of his followers, and looked to this brig to afford him the means of silencing the grumblers. He felt that an easy prize and a bout at bloodshed would clear the air.

This port, which had resembled a corner of heaven when Trimmer first found it, now might well have been mistaken for a fragment of a very different region. A clutter of huts had sprung up around the sheltered basin. No word of the new settlement had reached the ears of honest folk, officials, or traders; but the underworld of those seas had got wind of it, and the dregs of humanity had crawled slowly into it—women from cities along the Spanish Main, fugitives from justice, deserters from English, French, and Spanish ships and garrisons, broken planters, broken traders, gamblers, murderers, and runaway slaves.

At first Captain Trimmer and his ruffians had found these immigrants both pleasing and useful to them. Trimmer was the king of the place, *Hélène* was its queen, the members of the schooner's company and their lights-o'-love formed the aristocracy. Some of the immigrants became agents and spies for Trimmer and his men; others opened gambling-houses. Still others became the hewers of wood and drawers of water for the plantation.

Since his treacherous act against Burnham and the other schooner, Trimmer had not ventured far from his hiding-place or visited any of his other secret ports. His followers had been content, for a while, to remain inactive and wallow in the mire; but in the course of time many of them lost all their ready cash to the parasite gamblers.

At first it was a simple enough matter to set such an awkwardness straight by killing the gambler and starting all over again, but in time it was often the gambler who first used the knife or pistol. And some of the bold blades died at the hands of their shipmates, in senseless brawls, and others died of fever, and still others of too much rum.

As the pirates weakened in numbers, the parasites strengthened. Then the grumbling at John Trimmer commenced. Why didn't they put to sea? Why didn't they replenish their pockets from new prizes, or from one of their other treasure-ports? And what had happened to James Burnham and the other schooner?

Trimmer's attempts at answering these questions were not convincing. There was talk of Trimmer's jealousy of Burnham, and the spy who had served him in the matter of the frigate *Thunderous* dropped a few words of the truth. Trimmer went ashore and knifed the spy—but the mischief had been done. He was told to his face that by his treachery against Burnham and *Le Diable* he had everlastingly damned his luck.

He was afraid, despite his blustering oaths and blasphemous threats. He went aboard the schooner and lurked in his cabin like a hunted bear in its den. A sickness was upon him which made his nights hideous with dreams and open-eyed visions, and strangled his days with vague dread. He thought it was a slow fever, bred of the mists of the marsh to the right of the harbor; but in reality it was a sickness of the soul, bred of the poison of his innumerable bloody sins against God and man.

Fear was a strange messmate for John Trimmer, but now it was at his elbow night and day, urging him out to sea with one hand and holding him to his anchors with the other. He saw his authority shaking for a fall, he saw his very life threatened, but a numbness of heart and mind made him incapable of clear thought or decisive action.

At news of the trader in the offing Trimmer took heart. He flew signals summoning his crew to assemble and come aboard. Many were too ill, or too far gone in rum, or too mutinous to answer the signals save by oaths or shouts of derisive laughter from the shore. A few were dead who had been alive yesterday.

Forty came aboard at last. The anchors were walked up, the sails hoisted, and the schooner towed out of her berth. Outside the reef the wind filled her great sails. A mile to seaward crawled the brig, a perfect picture of dull and helpless commerce.

Trimmer thrust his belt full of pistols and knives, flashed a cutlas, and strutted in his old manner. A few of his fellows cheered. Some one went aloft with a glass to spy upon the brig's deck, and announced that the trader showed no guns and only ten men. The whole forty cheered at that.

The unfortunate brig cracked on sail, and her flutter of fear excited yells of derisive laughter from the schooner. Every man of the forty was armed to the teeth, though several of them could not stand up under the weight of their weapons. Not more than a dozen of them were in first-class fighting trim. The faces of some were as yellow as lemons, of others as purple as grapes. Fever had their bones and rum had their nerves—and the evil one had laid hold of their bodies while waiting for their souls. Here was a text for a sermon, if you like.

The schooner overhauled the brig in short order and ran her aboard. The grappling-irons were thrown. The brig's rail stood four feet higher than the schooner's. With a wild shout the boarders massed and scrambled in the lee scuppers, with Trimmer in the front rank.

The sides of the vessels ground together. Trimmer sprang to the schooner's rail, with his cutlas in his teeth, and up and over the side of the helpless trader. For a fraction of a second he saw a score of armed men crouched under the brig's bulwarks, caught the scent of burning powder and the splutter of fuses—and then his soul was torn free of his horror-stricken body in brief, terrible agony.

Down upon the heads and shoulders of the crowding boarders fell a shower of clumsy bombs—bottles, canisters, and earthen jugs charged with powder and slugs. The short fuses fell from some before the charges caught, and other fuses were tramped out blindly upon the deck; but five of the things exploded among the striving feet, killing and maiming a dozen of Trimmer's men. Then pistols were discharged and knives thrown by the brig's defenders, and the schooner's crew turned and struggled among themselves to win to the shelter of the cabin and forecastle.

James Burnham sprang down upon the schooner's deck, followed close by his twenty. Some of Trimmer's men turned and fought, but most of them fell with gaping wounds in their backs. Some recognized Burnham, and screamed to him for mercy in the name of old friendship; but his blood was up, and he stood in no need of old friends. It was a slaughter rather than a battle, and only Welsh Owen and five others were spared of Trimmer's ill-conditioned forty.

Welsh Owen explained Burnham's easy victory by telling of the hideous state of affairs in the harbor. James heard him with interest, then told his own story briefly. The dead were thrown overboard, and the schooner's decks were washed. Provisions were transferred from the brig to the schooner, after which the *Virtue* was scuttled.

There was treasure aboard the schooner, but there was more treasure hidden in the jungles behind the harbor. The schooner's company numbered twenty. The population of the harbor, such as it was, must have numbered close upon one hundred.

Burnham called a meeting of his followers and explained the condition of things ashore. He told them that the schooner was fit for sea, with stores and fresh water enough for the needs of her small company and gold and silver in the lazarettes. He was ready to sail to three other places where treasure was stored. They would all be rich as lords.

Was it worth the risk of their ship and their lives, he asked them, to reenter Trimmer's harbor and fight with the hundred ashore for a few thousand pounds' worth of coin and jewels? He did not think so—and the twenty were with him in that. So the *Wasp*, now as black as she had been white in the days of her glory, stood boldly out to sea.

I know nothing of the fate of Trimmer's harbor or of *Hélène da Silva*; but one can imagine fever, murder, rum, and desertion soon depopulating the village, and the oft-widowed *Hélène* eloping in an open boat with all the available provisions of the place and the hardiest of the parasites. One can imagine the vigorous, lush jungle reclaiming the little clearings, burying the huts and booths, and again overhanging the very lips of the water.

Some treasure might still be found there in some unlooted hole in the ground under

the jungle's heavy shade, and knives bitten deep with rust, and a tarnished buckle of silver from one of Hélène's little slippers—and bones gone to gray powder.

XVIII

FOUR months after the death of John Trimmer a gentleman who gave his name as James Fitzwalter engaged a passage from Kingston, Jamaica, to London, aboard the good ship *Golden Crown*. He wore a black patch over one eye, a scratch-wig, a decent blue coat, and white breeches something the worse for wear. The humpy roundness of his shoulders almost amounted to a deformity. His baggage consisted of a box of clothing, a smaller box full of books, and a weighty leather bag.

The captain of the *Golden Crown* considered Mr. Fitzwalter a very pleasant passenger, though of a remarkably quiet and retiring nature. He was a great student, it seemed, and would walk the deck for hours at a time with his nose in a book, heavy-shouldered and sedate.

He was a good listener, but never joined in the conversation of the ship's officers and his fellow passengers. His manner was detached, brooding, even sad; and this, in connection with an elaborate mourning-ring which he wore on the second finger of his right hand, led his companions to believe him to be a widower.

His age was the subject of much discussion. Some maintained that he had not yet seen his thirty-second year, and others that he would never again see his fiftieth.

The voyage was an uneventful one, and at the end of it Mr. Fitzwalter entered the mazes of London like a man who knew his way, with his leather bag in his hand and two watermen following with his chests. He soon found lodgings that suited him, and dismissed the watermen with a shilling apiece.

He remained in his apartments all day, having his meals served to him in his sitting-room. After his supper-dishes had been carried away by the little maid he locked his outer door and retired to his bedroom. There he undressed. Had a spy been hidden in the room, he would have been astonished to see that the slight hump of Mr. Fitzwalter's shoulders was a contrivance of leather attached to his person by straps; and when the artificial hump was removed the heraldic device of the Burnhams of Burnham came to light.

James Burnham, once more in his native land, clothed himself in silk and linen from the larger of his two boxes, and removed the black patch from his left eye. His garments were rich in material, but not of the latest cut. He transferred some gold from the leather bag to his pockets, hid the bag, the artificial hump, and the black patch between the mattresses of his bed, then went out, locking the doors behind him.

He went in his own hair, leaving his scratch-wig in his bedroom. At his side he wore a long, silver-hilted sword. He went straight to a tailor's shop, and, after a deal of thumping on a side door, brought the master of the establishment to an upper window.

At last the tailor consented to come down and admit the belated customer; and Mr. Fitzwalter—or James Burnham, if you like—was measured for a complete outfit of clothing that would have done credit to the greatest dandy at the court of the new queen.

James threw several gold pieces on the counter and told the man to ply his needle diligently. Next he visited a wig-maker and furnished himself with the latest thing in wigs to be had in town.

Next day James kept to his lodgings, heavy-shouldered, decently but somewhat poorly clothed, and with a patch over one eye. He smoked his long pipe and read in one of his brown books; and the little maid who waited upon him thought him a very kind and studious old gentleman.

After supper he changed again and went out into the ill-lit streets, leaving his deformity behind him. He visited half a dozen taverns and coffee-houses of the better sort. He drank sparingly, and at last returned to his lodgings without having seen or heard anything of the man he sought.

On the following night he visited another half-dozen taverns; and in the last one he overheard some talk of Percy Stanton.

"What has become of Percy Stanton?" asked one young blood of another. "I haven't clapped eyes on him since the Lord knows when. I don't miss his society, mind you, but I do miss his money!"

"So does he," replied the other young blood, and laughed immoderately. "You don't know Percy and his affairs as I do, Jack," he continued. "A bully, a sot, and a coward, with a dead corset-maker for a

grandfather. There you have him, Jack. He was in the army and served in the Indies. When he came home he had a wife with him—a little beauty, too—but who was she but the daughter of a tailor from some village in Berkshire! There was the deuce to pay, for his people had set their hearts on his making a fine match. His father and mother and sisters had even gone so far as to find a daughter of a ruined baron, who was willing to marry our bold Percy for the spending of the corset-maker's fortune. They gave Percy a thousand guineas in hand, settled an annuity of twenty-five guineas on him to expire when he expired, kicked him out of Corset Castle, and told him to go to the deuce. You saw his start, Jack. He's finishing in the lowest pot-houses; and I hear that he vents his spleen on his wife. He beats her, they say, and starves her."

"Why does she stay with him, if she's such a beauty?"

"Because she's married to him. The novelty of being a real wife, according to the laws of church and state, is what holds her to the fellow, past a doubt. Maybe you have seen a small young man named Bob Willis around the town—a ship's surgeon, or something of that kind? No? This Willis knew the pair in Jamaica or Tobago or wherever Percy was stationed, and fell in love with the fair Kitty. It may be that she liked Willis; but Willis was poor, and Percy was supposed to be rich. Willis is here now. He sends money to the woman, but never goes near her, and he follows Percy around and slaps his face every day; but Percy won't fight him. Percy is afraid of the little surgeon."

James left the coffee-house without waiting to hear more. He went home and sat for a long time staring at the flame of his candle. The expression of his face and eyes had changed within the past six months, and again within the last hour. Nothing had softened, and yet the set of the lips was less devilishly playful than of old. The formidable eyes looked tired.

God had struck James Burnham in the very core of the dark soul without so much as scarring the perfect body, shaking the pitiless brain, or dismaying the hard heart. He was sick of life, sick of anger and ambition, sick of blood-lust and money-lust; but curiously enough, one emotion of youth was left to him—his old, ignoble infatuation for Kitty.

Now he sat for a long time and stared at the flame of the candle.

The new clothes came from the tailor next day, but when James went out on the night's business he did not wear them. He issued into the dark street in rough, seafaring kit, with a bearded face and dirty hands. In this disguise he visited many cheap and disreputable taverns and gaming-houses in search of Percy Stanton. He had no success that night, but on the next he found his enemy.

He did not accost Stanton, but watched him furtively from a shadowed corner. The fellow had sunk to a terrible depth since the morning of the duel on the sands of Nevis. His face was gross and purple and loose-lipped; and his soul, which was three parts coward and one part brute, looked shamelessly out of the bloodshot eyes.

His attire, which still showed signs of its former glory, was rent and unclean. He drank gluttonously of cheap spirits and threw dice with two companions as disreputable as himself.

When Stanton at last got to his feet and reeled out of the place, James Burnham rang a shilling upon the table and followed him. They had not gone far from the pot-house in which they had been drinking when Stanton was accosted by a crippled beggar. The beggar asked for a penny, but Stanton gave him a blow with his fist which sent him into the foul gutter cursing and whining.

Leaving the cripple to pick himself up and recover his crutches, Stanton continued on his reeling way, with the bearded seaman still on his track. James noted the incident with satisfaction, for it suggested to him a plan of conduct for the future. He felt no pity for the cripple.

James must have followed his unsuspecting guide a matter of half a mile through alleys and streets, crooked, narrow, and mean, before the journey ended. Stanton entered a black doorway. Burnham heard him stagger heavily up a shaking staircase and beat upon a quaking door. The portal opened, a woman cried out faintly and fearfully, and the door was shut with a bang.

James hesitated for a moment, then entered the house and went noiselessly and cautiously up the decrepit stairs. The damp air of the place smelled of mildew and poverty, of rags and misery. With his

wide-spread hands Burnham felt the broken stair-rail on one side and the broken plaster of the wall on the other. He saw a thread of light under the door on the first landing.

He stood listening to the sound of half-suppressed sobs from the other side of the door; then, swiftly assuming the gait and facial expression of extreme alcoholic intoxication, he pushed open the door and staggered across the threshold. He halted just within the room, swaying on his feet and surveying the depressing and dramatic scene with a drunken leer.

The woman who sobbed was Kitty—but not the blooming Kitty that he had known of old in London, or a few short months ago in Nevis. Her plentiful hair streamed untidily upon her shoulders, her small face was thin and pale, her eyes were dim and her lids swollen from much weeping, and her gown was torn. She was on her feet beside an overturned chair, trying to wrench herself free from her husband.

Stanton held her by one thin wrist with his left hand, and in his right hand he grasped a stick of that flexible West Indian plant called supple-jack. His hand was raised to strike at the instant of James Burnham's entrance. The two became motionless as figures of wax at the opening of the door; and so they stood for a time as if spellbound, staring at the bearded and intoxicated mariner. The scene was dimly illuminated by two tallow dips which stood on a table near the overturned chair.

Stanton was the first to move. He dropped the woman's wrist and rushed unsteadily at the intruder with a volley of oaths. The bearded seaman stepped aside with amazing agility for one in his apparent condition and shot out a long leg. Stanton came to the uncarpeted floor with a crash.

The intruder snatched up the discarded supple-jack and laced the prostrate husband about the back and legs until the cloth of the garments was cut into ribbons. This done, he left the room without a word and returned to the street by the way he had come up from it, taking the supple-jack with him.

On the next night James attired himself in his new, fine clothes, his new wig, and his new hat. He cut a distinguished figure. Before leaving his bedroom he produced the artificial hump of leather

from its hiding-place. He laid the contrivance on the dressing-table between the two candles, untied some thongs on the under side of it, and raised a flap of leather.

Evidently the thing was a receptacle as well as a disguise, for from its hollow interior he drew several small but heavy packets done up securely in canvas. With the point of his knife he cut the threads which bound one of the packets. He turned back the canvas, and a blaze of many-colored fires leaped up between his hands.

There lay diamonds, alive with white flames and blue flames; rubies pulsing as red as living hearts; emeralds and sapphires—the glinting, wonderful things which he had taken and paid for in blood to the everlasting damnation of his soul.

He surveyed them without eagerness, without repulsion, without emotion of any kind. The time had been when such a display of treasure would have set his eye glinting and his blood racing; but now, with cool eyes and unshaken fingers, he selected a dozen of the smaller stones from the mass and stowed them away in a pocket of his coat. He then returned the rest of the collection to its hiding-place.

James Burnham knew London high and low. There were pawnbrokers in London then as now; and the peculiar characteristics of that ancient calling have not changed in a fraction over two centuries. James went to one of these, and to exactly the right one for his purpose. With his fine clothes and his fine manner he passed himself off as a reckless young lord who had lost so heavily at play that he was reduced to selling the family trinkets.

Thanks to the devilish glint in his eyes, which could still return upon occasion, he drove a far better bargain than any young lord would have driven, and left the premises with a canvas bag containing minted gold to at least one-third of the value of the stones. He returned straight to his lodgings.

James continued to haunt the town of nights, sometimes as a dandy, sometimes as a decent, middle-aged scholar with a slightly humped back, and sometimes as a bearded mariner. He saw nothing of Robert Willis; and it was not until the fifth night after he had administered the beating with the supple-jack that he saw Stanton back in his favorite tavern.

He had been waiting for this very thing; and as soon as darkness filled the streets again he slipped out of his humble lodgings arrayed in his bravest attire. Hidden upon his gorgeous person he carried fifty guineas and, in the form of six fine diamonds, the value of a thousand guineas.

He hired a chair at the corner of the street and in it made the journey to Stanton's lodgings. He paid and dismissed the men at the black doorway, and they did not wait to be told twice to return to a safer quarter of the town.

James drew his sword, and with a knife in his left hand ascended the shaking stairs, for this was a risky place for a gentleman dressed like a marquis or a duke. But as he arrived on the landing he returned the sword to its scabbard and the knife to its sheath, and rapped softly on the door.

The door was opened by Kitty. James stepped smartly within and shut the door behind him. Kitty uttered a little cry and recoiled from him fearfully. She fled to the farther side of the little table.

"You!" she cried, with a hand on her breast. "I knew you—that night you came and beat him—though you wore a great beard. He did not know you. Why have you come? Is not my misery black enough as it is?"

James bowed, hat in hand. He smiled grimly.

"Calm yourself," he said. "I have no intention of beating you, my dear. I leave that to your charming husband. You will be good enough to remember that I never so much as raised a hand against you in my life. Why are you afraid of me? Why do you hate me?"

"I think you are the evil one," she replied faintly.

"If I am the evil one, then what is Stanton?"

"He is a fool, a coward, a beast; but I do not fear him. I despise him—yes, and now I hate him; but I do not fear him. He married me."

"But didn't I offer to marry you? Yes, and now I repeat the offer."

She gazed at him with terror-stricken eyes. She shivered.

"Very well, my dear," he continued. "You have told me, plainer than words, that I'm no longer to your liking. Strange, too, for now I am rich—and in the old days you did not act as if I were entirely

repulsive to you. And you hate Stanton. What about Willis?"

She fell to her knees with a cry piteous beyond description. She crawled to him on her knees.

"Kill me, an you will," she cried, "but do not harm him. He is good and kind and brave. I would kill myself, but for him. He cares—and I love him, love him! Spare him, for Heaven's sake!"

XIX

JAMES BURNHAM looked down at the distracted woman kneeling in supplication at his feet, and for a fleeting instant his face worked convulsively. Then he stepped back a pace, out of reach of her pleading hands, and laughed lightly.

"Go back to the chair and sit down, my good girl," he said. "Willis is in no danger from me, and never was. As for yourself, I would not harm a hair of your silly head. And now tell me, my dear, why Mr. Willis does not make an end of your precious husband? He's a man, is Bob."

"He cannot force Percy to fight with him," whispered Kitty.

James smiled and brushed a perfumed handkerchief across his lips. The woman, now seated in the chair, continued to gaze at him in terror-stricken yet fascinated inquiry.

"So!" said James. "Master Percy is afraid of the little man, of course; and yet he was a very good swordsman when I fought him that morning in Nevis. I made a mistake in not finishing him then. But tell me this, my dear—if anything should happen to Master Stanton, would Willis come to you?"

"He waits at the Green Dragon," she replied. "I have but to send a word to him—or go to him. But—but would you murder Percy? It would benefit you nothing. Nothing, do you hear?"

"I have murdered better men, and for nothing," answered James. "But I did not come here to talk about myself. Your brother John, who escaped from the guardians of the law and engaged in business in the West Indies, sent this bag of guineas and these stones to you by my hand. Hide them away, there's a good girl. I promised John that they should not fall into Stanton's hands."

He placed the guineas and the six diamonds on the little table in front of her, turned, and hastened from the room and

the house. He went blindly for several hundred yards. Then, his wits clearing suddenly, he drew his sword and continued his journey with caution.

He reached his lodgings without accident. A church clock chimed eleven as he unlocked his door.

Percy Stanton reeled out of the Spotted Dog at exactly two hours after midnight. He was in his usual condition, and, finding the flagged footpath too narrow for him, made frequent excursions into the cobbled gutter.

Here was a pretty state of affairs for a man of his parts, he reflected—and all because he had been fool enough to let Kitty trick him into marrying her. She was a sly little puss, she was! She had done him out of seven thousand pounds a year.

He cursed thickly at the thought and vowed he'd make the skin jump on her shoulders when he got home. The supplejack had gone, 'tis true; but he had a leather belt that would serve his purpose.

The corner of Hound Alley and Little Spanish Street was very dark. In a black doorway sat an ancient cripple. In one hand he grasped two golden guineas—undreamed-of wealth. He grinned and listened—and waited. In the gutter waited another ragged and crooked fellow, leaning heavily upon the crutches which he had rented for a little while from the cripple in the doorway.

Out of Hound Alley staggered Stanton. "A penny, cap'n!" whined the fellow in the gutter. "A penny for pore old 'Odge what lost 'is leg a servin' o' 'is king!"

He hitched himself across Stanton's course; and just as Stanton cursed him and struck at him with a stout stick, he thrust one of his crutches between Stanton's feet. Down crashed the bully in the gutter. The cripple instantly dropped the crutches, flung himself upon the prostrate sot, and drove a knife hilt-deep into the quivering back again and again. He sprang to his feet at last, recovered the crutches, and returned them to the old fellow in the doorway.

"And here is another yellow boy for you, mate," he said. "Now take my advice and stir your stumps. You want to be a long way from here before morning!"

With this he turned and walked briskly away. The real cripple bit the third guinea with his two remaining teeth by way

of a test, then stowed it and the other two in a place of concealment among his rags. He chuckled. He fixed his crutches under his arms and hitched himself across the footpath to where Stanton's lifeless form sprawled in the gutter.

The old man prodded the body with one of his crutches and chuckled again. At last he left it and stumped away—and that quarter of London knew him no more.

When Stanton's corpse was found at sunrise, the landlord of the Spotted Dog identified it and gave its address to the authorities. So it was carried off and presented to the widow. Kitty screamed and fainted. When she came out of her swoon she accepted the coroner's opinion that Stanton had come by his death in a drunken brawl. He had a reputation for drunkenness, it seems.

Kitty voiced no opinion of her own. She paid a tallow-faced man in rusty black the sum of thirty shillings to take the remains away and give them decent burial.

Kitty did not send for Willis immediately, for she was afraid. James Burnham had killed her husband. Might he not kill her lover? He had promised not to hurt Bob, 'tis true; but she was afraid. Why had he given money and diamonds to her if he did not mean harm to Willis?

And what of this money? For her own part, she was glad of it; but what would Bob Willis say to it? She knew nothing of her brother's fate or career as a pirate; but she felt sure that the gold and stones had not come from him. She more than suspected their history, having heard the rumor, aboard the frigate, that James Burnham had turned pirate.

Theoretically the gleaming coins and glinting stones were red with innocent blood. She could not see it; but she knew that Willis would. How was she to benefit by James Burnham's generosity?

Kitty passed three days and nights in nerve-racking fear and doubt. She spent some of the guineas in food and clothing and the payment of small debts, but she came to no plan of action concerning the diamonds. James Burnham did not return, to her vast relief.

On the fourth day of her widowhood she sent to the Green Dragon for Willis. The messenger returned with word that the gentleman was sick of a fever and quite out of his mind. So Kitty forgot her fear of James Burnham, her worry concerning

the precious stones, and thought only of the little surgeon.

She took up her abode at the Green Dragon, which was a quiet and respectable inn, far removed from the miserable tenement and street to which she and Stanton had descended, in the character of the sick gentleman's sister. She was from the country, she said. She played the part to perfection, nursed her lover night and day, had in the best doctor, and paid all charges as she went.

To cut a long story short, Willis recovered from the fever and married Kitty without delay. Nursing him had evidently agreed with her, for she had recovered her looks to an amazing extent. She told him nothing of James Burnham's visit or gift. It was decided that they should go to the country and live very quietly in his home village, where he would practise his profession.

On the night before the morning of their departure from London they sat for hours at their open window. Her head rested upon his shoulder and his right arm was about her slender waist. He told her of his people, of the old farmhouse, of the broad acres, of the sleepy village. His father was a substantial yeoman, proud of his class and his family traditions. His mother was the youngest daughter of a small country gentleman.

There was a cottage of old pink brick in the village, its walls clambered over by climbing roses, which would be theirs for the asking. Even should his practise be small, want would not touch them. The gray face of want and the delirious glare of great riches had alike been unknown to any Willis for two hundred years.

These things he whispered to her, and many more of a like nature. They soothed her hungry, wearied little heart like strains of heavenly music.

A quick step sounded upon the stairs and a loud knock rang upon the door. Kitty's heart jumped in her side, and a chill like the chill of death's shadow went through her blood. Had James Burnham come? Was this paradise, upon the threshold of which she and her beloved stood, to be shattered from her hands and lips in shameful ruin?

The six diamonds which James had given her seemed to burn into the flesh of her breast like bits of red-hot iron. There in the soft dark she covered her face with

her hands and breathed a frenzied prayer for mercy.

Willis opened the door, all unconscious of his wife's agony of apprehension. On the threshold stood James Burnham, gorgeously attired, with one of the servants of the inn at his elbow holding two candles in silver sticks. He bowed and extended his hand to the surgeon. Willis took it.

"I have only now heard of your happiness, Bob," said James. "I am sailing to-morrow, and so hastened here to congratulate you. You and I were good friends, Bob!"

"Yes," replied Willis awkwardly, remembering the rumors he had heard aboard the frigate. "Yes, Jim. Indeed, you are very kind."

"Give my most respectful regards to your wife, lad," said James. "I admired her greatly in Nevis. I am growing old, Bob—and something of a sentimentalist, I fear. Your hand again, lad. Good night and good-by!"

With that he turned and went swiftly down the stairs, leaving the surgeon gaping on the threshold.

Willis recovered his wits at last, took the candles from the servant, and turned into the room. He set the candles on the table and closed the door.

"It was James Burnham," he said, peering toward his wife, who sat in the gloom by the open window, beyond the poor light of the candles. "He came to wish us joy, trigged out like a dandy at her majesty's court—and a bloody pirate, 'tis said! It would be no more than my duty, as an honest citizen, to inform the authorities of his presence in London. His hands reek with the blood of hundreds, if we could but see it. His fine clothes are sodden with innocent blood. The jewels on his fingers are the devil's wages to him for work well done—if what I have been told is true. I should have held him when he was here. I should have thrown the charge in his teeth; but the amazing self-assurance of the man and the suddenness and fine manners of him scattered my wits."

"No, no!" cried Kitty. "He was your friend once."

"Aye, he was my friend; and I still feel a sneaking, dishonest affection for him," replied Willis. "I held his hand just now—not the hand of the murderer of innocent voyagers, but the hand of the duelist

that wrought so well for me that morning on the sands of Nevis. But there—I meant not to say that! The past is dead, sweeting. As for James Burnham, he is safe from any word or act of mine—and it was like you, my wife, who had known him only as an acquaintance for a little while in Nevis, to plead for him!”

He came over to her and took her in his arms. She clung to him and wept.

Half an hour later, when Kitty was alone for a minute, she tore a tiny pouch of silk from her bosom and flung it from the open window with all her strength. I like to think that the six diamonds were picked up by some poor fellow in desperate need of food and raiment for himself, his wife, and children; but I know nothing of their fate.

XX

MR. JAMES FITZWALTER, the bookish, middle-aged gentleman of the scratch-wig, humped shoulders, and decent blue coat, paid his bill and left his lodgings. He departed with his leather bag in his hand and two porters following with his boxes, and never again was he seen by his landlady, nor by the little maid who had served his simple meals to him and blacked his square-toed shoes.

At the same time, in another quarter of the town, a distinguished-looking stranger was missed from the foppish companies of certain fashionable coffee-houses; and the Spotted Dog saw no more a particular bearded mariner who had become famous in that infamous retreat for his silver-lined pocket, his silent tongue, and his formidable eye.

James was tired of life. He had known little in life save vileness, and of that he was now heartily sick. Wickedness had grown monotonous to him. Now that his pockets were full of gold, he knew how little is to be bought with it.

In his narrow berth in the merchantman that was taking him back to the green isles and narrow seas he lay awake for hours every night, thinking, thinking. His thoughts dealt often with Kitty. He wondered why he had wanted her so persistently—why, for that matter, he wanted her still.

“After all is said and done, the fact remains that I loved the pretty wench, else I’d never have let her go to Willis when I had her in my hand,” he reflected.

This reflection amused him, but it was a bitter sort of amusement that sometimes verged on self-pity. He liked to recall and repicture in his clear mind the night of his capture and escape in Bottle Harbor. He could see Alexander’s face now, close to his own, white and unmistakable in the dark, and twisted with anxiety and a desperate purpose. He felt his brother’s fingers on his wrists again, and the shearing cut of the knife across the gnawing cords.

It pleased him to think that his brother had set him free from the grip of the law—that he owed his deliverance to a man of his own blood. This thought often served to drive terrible pictures from his mind.

Within a day of his landing in the iniquitous town of Port Royal James happened upon young Henry Todd. Poor Todd’s last shilling was gone, for in the slashing life of Port Royal he had found himself to be a pigeon among hawks. He was frightened, bewildered, and hungry, and at sight of James he wept for joy.

James cursed Henry Todd roundly, threatened to beat him if he did not cease his blubbering instantly, then slipped five guineas into his hand and ordered him to buy food and decent clothing.

In Port Royal James lived a riotous but dreary week. He cared nothing for the morrow; and yet it did not occur to him that the simplest way to outwit the morning was to draw a knife across his own throat during the night. For seven days he threw his money to the right and the left, and living and reasoning only from glass to glass, from oath to oath, from moment to moment—and always with the devoted Henry Todd at his elbow.

Then a press-gang from Admiral Benbow’s ship found him in a harborside dive, surrounded by empty bowls and drunken parasites. The parasites made feeble but noisy resistance to the press-gang; but James, who seemed to be as sober as a judge, raised no protest with voice or hand. He ordered Henry Todd to return his knife to its sheath, silenced his bawling companions with an oath, then doffed his hat to the young lieutenant who commanded the press. He vowed that nothing could possibly suit his humor like serving her majesty against the French, threw gold upon the table, and shouted for a fresh brew of punch for all hands.

What had promised to be a bloody impressment became a friendly party.

"I see that you are a gentleman, sir—a man of education and property," said the lieutenant; "so I must let you go."

"Not at all, sir!" replied James. "If the admiral needs men, then let him take men of breeding as well as the sweepings of the port. I am at his service. My name is James Fitzwalter. But a word in your ear, my dear sir—which same I shall expect you to repeat into the ear of the admiral. I know something of big guns; and if fifty guineas will buy me the rating and berth of a master gunner, then do I most freely volunteer my services to her majesty and Admiral Benbow."

"This is very handsome of you," replied the young officer; "and as we happen to be short of gunners as well as seamen, I'm firmly of the opinion that your services and your guineas will be accepted."

Lieutenant Jenkyn was right. And so it came about that James Burnham, otherwise James Fitzwalter, went aboard the line-of-battle ship *Breda*, of seventy guns, to serve his queen and country. He was called before the admiral.

"How is this?" cried John Benbow, glaring at the recruit. "You possess fifty guineas and a knowledge of great guns, and you volunteer to serve in this ship as a master gunner? Explain yourself, my good sir."

"My last fifty guineas, your honor," lied James, bowing. "Again, sir, I have but recently become a widower."

"Enough," replied the admiral. "If you can fight your guns, that is all I ask. I'm in no position to look a gift-horse in the teeth. I am short of men, devilish short—and Du Casse is somewhere to the south, with five ships and four frigates, and I must be after him."

So James was given command of five guns on the upper deck, forward, on the starboard side. Though the discipline of the flag-ship was like iron, rules were few; and so it happened that Master Gunner Fitzwalter messed as frequently with the midshipmen and junior lieutenants as with his brother master gunners.

He always wore linen; and, moreover, his linen and his lace were always scrupulously clean. The humble Todd saw to that. His coat was of decent blue, his breeches of spotless white, his stockings of black silk. He wore no wig, but his hair was always neatly tied and freshly powdered.

He might have worn a full-bottomed wig for all John Benbow would have cared—so long as he attended to his duties. At his side he carried a straight, slender sword with a silver hilt. He talked little, read much, and nursed his five guns and his twenty men like a mother. His crews were constantly at drill, and for their extra work he paid them out of his own pocket.

Since joining the *Breda* he had ceased to live for the moment but for the fight; but beyond the fight his thoughts did not go. Neither hope nor ambition awoke in him, but he was conscious of something new and soothing in his burned heart—contentment.

On the morning of July 11, 1702, Admiral Benbow sailed out of Port Royal in search of Admiral du Casse. Benbow's flag flew on the *Breda*. His fleet consisted of the ships *Breda*, *Defiance*, *Windsor*, *Greenwich*, and *Pendennis*, and the frigates *Ruby* and *Falmouth*.

A rough, tough old sailor was John Benbow, with the heart and the manners of a lion. He had tested his courage and learned his manners in a hard school. His officers immediately in touch with him, of his own ship, respected him, but felt no love for him. His men thought him the greatest sailor afloat—but they feared him like the evil one. He was a lonely soul, and old at fifty-two.

He was quick to find fault with his subordinates and equally slow to praise them; but he never found fault with his new master gunner. Perhaps he recognized in Mr. Fitzwalter another lonely soul. The admiral never spoke to James in blame or in commendation; but on the evening of the sixth day out of port he walked down to where the volunteer gunner leaned against one of his guns.

James stood straight and touched his hat. The admiral halted before him and glared.

"Take command of all the starboard guns on this deck, Mr. Fitz-What's-Yer-Name, and see that you get crews and guns up to your standard in short order. Shift your hammock and your mess to the gun-room. I will see to it that your rank is confirmed later by the so-called proper authorities."

Here was promotion with a vengeance! James was pleased, but in no degree elated; and he was amused.

"Suppose they don't find me out until I'm an admiral?" he reflected. "Would they hang me to my own yard-arm then, I wonder?"

And still he felt no desire to look into the future beyond the battle which was sure to take place as soon as the French fleet was found. Life held nothing for him, he knew, but one more fight—and death. He was done with ambition, lust, and anxiety; but he was proud of his efficiency. So he devoted himself to the task of bringing up the standard of his ten new guns and their crews to that of the five guns and crews which had been his from the first. The guns and their tackles were thoroughly overhauled, and the men were drilled until the weaklings dropped.

Superior to fatigue himself, and hardened to the sweltering sun and listless airs, James sweated his men like a slave-driver. Purely as a matter of pride he was determined that the glaring admiral should not regret having promoted him. His men found him a bitter, hard master, but generous with his silver.

On the morning of August 19 the enemy was sighted off Santa Marta. The French ships were all abroad on the blue, and the English were likewise widely scattered. Du Casse, it would seem, was in no hurry to fight and yet in no mind to run away. The wind was a mere hot breath, now struggling to fill a great sail and now fainting and falling utterly.

The admiral signaled for his captains to come aboard the flag-ship for consultation and instructions. The Ruby, a brig of twenty-four guns, was the nearest of the fleet to the Breda, and so Captain Walton was the first to come aboard. He paced the quarter-deck with the admiral, the commander, the sailing-master, and the first lieutenant. He was a small man with an ugly face, a broken nose, and dull eyes. His gait was shambling, his clothes were ill-set and none too new. In short, he was a most undistinguished looking sailor; and yet Benbow eyed him almost kindly.

The other captains arrived one by one, evidently in no great haste to receive their instructions. Benbow welcomed them with glares and continued his talk with Walton.

Kirkby, of the Defiance, was the last to arrive. It was close upon noon when he came over the Breda's side, and yet his ship lay not more than two miles away. This was too much for the admiral's tem-

per, which exploded in a volley of abuse. The captains returned to their commands with red faces and tingling ears.

The two fleets rolled idly in sight of each other all day. During the night a little wind awoke for an hour or two, and the admiral signaled with great lanterns for his ships to close up on him and advance in column; but the wind fell before much was accomplished in the way of closing up on the flag-ship.

Morning showed the French ships as far away as on the previous day, but not so widely scattered upon the blue. A light wind sprang up, and Admiral Benbow flew the signal to advance.

The other ships drew in. The French fleet moved toward the east for several hours, then swung northward straight away from the coast. Benbow shifted his course to cut the enemy off from the open sea and signaled his captains to follow him.

On the morning of the 21st Admiral Benbow beheld the fleet of Admiral du Casse in line across his bows and the French flag-ship almost within gunshot. Of his own vessels, the little Ruby was close astern; the others were far in the rear or far to the right and left. He cursed his captains for fools and laggards, signaled for advance and general action, and crowded on sail.

The Breda struck the center of the French line at ten o'clock in the morning; and so commenced one of the most incredible sea-fights in history, and surely the most infamous recorded in the annals of the British navy.

Benbow ran between two of the French ships, gave them each a broadside, took some of their metal in return, and passed on. The Ruby sheered off a little, crossed the stern of Du Casse's ship, and raked her with ten guns. The English ship and brig had the heels of the French ships. They were faster, handier, and better sailed.

By noon no other English ship had come up. The battle was a slow-moving game of run, turn, bite, and run again. Singly and in pairs, the French ships chased or met the Breda or the Ruby, gave a broadside and received one, and chased again. The rest of the English fleet watched the fight from afar and followed it cautiously.

The luck of John Benbow was only equaled by his valor—and by his rage against his craven captains. His spars

continued to stand as if by magic; and every broadside of his wrought havoc to the enemy aloft and below. The Ruby was not quite so fortunate, and just before sunset drew aside from the core of the unequal fight.

The Ruby returned to the fight at dawn, and all day the two did battle against the nine, while the other English ships hung off and watched.

By the third morning James Burnham was in command of all the guns on the Breda's upper deck, starboard and larboard; and never before, perhaps, had guns been served so furiously, yet so faultlessly. A third of his men were dead or disabled, and yet the fire of his artillery never failed when a target was presented.

Now he set his own hand to the tackle. His coat was gone, his fine shirt was torn, and blood and powder-smoke begrimed him. Henry Todd, who had deserted his sheltered but harrowing tasks in the cockpit, fought and sweated at the gun-captain's elbow.

In a lull in the cannonading the admiral descended from the quarter-deck and picked his way among the dead and wounded to where the gun-captain stood a little withdrawn from the crew of the nearest gun. James did not see the admiral, but was staring off across a splintered rail at one of the craven English ships. His shirt, wet, torn, and stained, was ripped away from one shoulder, leaving displayed that distinguished but now infamous design on the white and glistening skin.

Benbow halted behind the gun-captain. The tattooed device caught his eyes. He stared with hardening eyes.

"What do I see on your back, Mr. Fitzwalter?" he asked in a low, grinding voice.

James turned. Blood and sweat ran upon his face. His eyes darkened, but their glance did not waver from that of the admiral.

"It is a mark which my father put there when I was a child, sir," the gun-captain replied composedly.

"And a very distinguished heraldic device, to boot," returned John Benbow. "I have heard of it, honorably and dishonorably, in these seas and elsewhere. So your name is Burnham! Let me believe it to be Alexander Burnham, late a distinguished officer in this service."

"I regret to say, sir, that I cannot claim that honor. My name is James Burnham."

"You are the Wasp, then—the most notorious, bloody pirate these seas have known since the days of Flint!"

"It would be useless to deny it, sir," replied the gun-captain in a somewhat pinched voice. "But, for Heaven's sake, let me finish this fight!" he cried, a sudden spasm suddenly wrecking the composure of his blood-stained face. "Let me see this fight through, I beg of you!"

John Benbow's eyes wavered.

"Very good," he said. "Very good! You have worked your guns bravely, sir; but if you are alive after the fight, and I have a yard left, you shall swing! Yes, even if you were my own son! And here's my hand on it, lad."

They shook hands gravely; then the admiral swung on his heel and returned to the quarter-deck. A couple of French ships were soon within pistol-range again, and James went back to his work with unflagging zest and frightful execution.

The murderous hail from his broadside soon sent one of the enemy reeling off to recover her breath; but others closed in. Burnham took the place of one man, of two, of an entire gun's crew. His strength seemed more than human. His men fell on his right, on his left, against his breast, and at his feet, and he ran red with their blood. Still he drove the survivors to their guns and worked his own.

Benbow saw that he was fighting a hopeless fight, for his craven captains still hung inactive on the skirts of the battle. Only the little Ruby was with him, shattered of hull, cluttered with wreckage, with only her mainmast standing, but still sailing and fighting.

So he drew out of the fight, hoping for no more than to get back to port with the Breda and the brig, and to arrange for the hanging of the cowards who had deserted him, their country, and their queen.

It was not until the night of the third day of the battle that the two heroic vessels cleared their skirts of the enemy for long enough to make some repairs to their spars and hulls. The survivors of the two crews toiled all night at planks and ropes and spars, hopefully preparing for honorable escape; but when morning broke, with a piping wind, John Benbow changed his mind.

"We are not beaten yet," said he.

Again he flew his signals for general action and turned upon the enemy—and

again the valorous Ruby obeyed the order. This was the fourth day of the battle of one ship and one brig against five ships and four frigates. Two of the French ships were out of action. All showed the marks of British teeth.

That day's fight was not an hour advanced before a flying splinter of teak struck James Burnham across the chest and hurled him to the deck, senseless and dying. Henry Todd caught him in his arms as he fell. The admiral went down and knelt beside him. A surgeon poured brandy between the gray lips. The gun-captain opened his eyes.

"Lad, you would have been safe!" whispered Benbow. "I lied when I said otherwise."

"It is better this way," breathed James.

"May God have mercy on your soul," said the admiral tenderly.

"I look for no mercy," replied James. "Where is Todd? Right here, of course. Good-by to you, lad!"

He was dead before they could carry him below.

Half an hour later the admiral's right leg was smashed by a chain-shot. He ordered a cot to be brought to the quarter-deck. From the cot he directed the last desperate passages of that desperate fight.

But a terrible spirit of destruction had fled from the Breda with the flight of James Burnham's soul. No longer did her guns repulse the clinging ships of France. So, in mid-afternoon, on a strengthening wind, the Breda and the Ruby pulled sullenly away from the pack, still firing a few guns, still flying their country's flag. From the masthead of the Breda the order for a general attack still flashed in the sun.

The Breda and the Ruby reached Kingston Harbor at last, and the admiral was carried ashore. His leg was amputated, but on the 4th of November, seventy-two

days after receiving the wound, he died of it.

Before his death two of his craven captains were shot at Plymouth, one was thrown into prison, and one was suspended. Another died before the court martial—'tis hoped by his own hand. Captain Walton, of the Ruby, was promoted.

Also, before his death, the admiral wrote the following letter to Sir Walter Burnham, of Burnham, Berkshire, baronet.

SIR:

I feel it my duty to inform you that, during my last engagement with the French, in which engagement I received the injury of which I am now dying, I was particularly attracted by the splendid energy and courage of a member of my ship's company who called himself James Fitzwalter.

He had joined me in Port Royal, not long before this time, as a volunteer master gunner. Because of his ability and devotion to duty, I promoted him to the command of all the heavy guns on the starboard side of the upper deck of my flag-ship before we came in touch with M. du Casse.

His work throughout the four days' battle was of the highest order. He was killed by a shot from the enemy on the morning of the fourth day. He died almost immediately after receiving the wound, fearless to the last, but without hope of the Divine Mercy; yet I cannot think that his prodigious services to queen and country during those four terrific days passed unremarked and unappreciated by Almighty God.

However that may be, sir, I am glad to be able to report that, in my humble opinion, the gun-captain with the distinguished device tattooed on his back, just beneath the blade of the left shoulder, fought like a hero and died like a gentleman—however he may have fought and lived in the past. God have mercy on his soul!

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,

JOHN BENBOW,

Admiral of the White.

THE END

EDITOR'S NOTE—The book-length novel to be published complete in the October issue of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE will be "The Hour of Conflict," by A. Hamilton-Gibbs, author of "Cheadle & Son" and other books.

The scene of "The Hour of Conflict" is laid in France and England. It tells the story of a reckless young man who sinned and sorrowed, and who was finally purified by suffering and by love. It is an unusual piece of writing, having a dignity and quality too seldom met with in the strivings of contemporary fictionists. The love story is as sweet as the scent of honeysuckle, and a gentle, heart-warming humor flashes through it all. It is a book which you will want to put away among your literary treasures, for it will bear more than one reading.

This series of complete novels began with "The Flying Courtship," by E. J. Rath, published in the June number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. "The Kangaroo," by Harris Dickson, followed in July, and "The Little Nugget," by P. G. Wodehouse, in August. The numbers containing these stories are still in stock, and can be ordered from any newsdealer, or from the publishers, price fifteen cents each.

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